Tuesday, January 5, 2010 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 35 / No. 28 P10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Dick, Bayani bicker over design of women's urinals

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY MAY BE RUNNING mates but they have room for disagreement, particularly on—of all things—urinals for women.

Asked yesterday at a press conference in

DICK, A11

Erap longtime adviser UP dean De Guzman, 79

By Norman Bordadora

THE MAN CREDITED WITH SHOWERING the support of the University of the Philippines academics to former President Joseph Estrada, has died at 79.

Dr. Raul de Guzman, who was married to Estrada's sister, Maria Hortencia Ejercito, had been the key adviser of Estrada from the time he first ran for public office.

ERAP, A4

VIP treatment probed

House still at it, makes final bid for Cha-cha bill

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE POWERS THAT BE JUST refuse to give up on Charter change.

The leadership of the House of Representatives is making a final bid, before the current 14th Congress bows out, to pass a bill seeking to convene a constitutional convention for the purpose of amending the Constitution next year.

Speaker Prospero Nograles has shortlisted a Con-con bill that had been set for second reading before the House went into its long Christmas break, hoping that the Senate would "confirm."

"Time may run be on our side, but we will do it. All the standing and special committees, led by the committee on rules, are up to their respective mandates. We have worktodo," he said.

The House bill proposes to hold elections for some 200 Con-con delegates at the same time as the barangay elections set for October 2010.

The House has settled for the Con-con mode of constitutional change after the majority bloc failed to railroad the passage of a bill seeking to convene the two chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly that would vote jointly and not separately to amend the Constitution.

The proposals for a constitutional convention have been pending in the House for a long time. The current one is composed of a resolution calling for a Con-con and a separate bill authored by Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga that sets down the mechanics and details for organizing a constitutional convention in 2010.

While there seems to be a

HOUSE, A4

PNP admits failure to dismantle private armies

By Marlon Ramos

NATIONAL POLICE OFFICIALS said it was necessary to create an independent body to stamp out private armies, virtually admitting that police and military programs aimed at eradicating the growing menace had failed.

The role of a "third party" is vital in finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the proliferation of latest goons, especially during the election period, said Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Verzosa.

One of the things that the commission, created by President Macapagal-Arroyo under Administrative Order No. 275, can do is

PNP ADMITS, A11

CIDG commander sees 'nothing wrong'

By Aquilino Zenio and Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao
and Marlon Ramos in Manila

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE CRIMINAL Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has begun looking into allegations that four members of the powerful Ampatuan clan in the custody of its regional office here were being given VIP (Very Important Person) treatment.

But Director Raul Castañeda, the CIDG chief, saw nothing wrong with the massacre suspects using their mobile phones, dining on catered food and having someone clean up after them.

"I don't think we can consider those violations, or special treatment," he told the Inquirer in Manila by phone.

He added: "They are not yet convicted, so they can still use mobile phones, but it should be regulated.

"There's no problem with them ordering in food,

especially because Maguindanao like them have [restrictions] in the kind of food they eat. Any inmate, not just the Ampatuans, is allowed to do that."

Nevertheless, Castañeda said, Senior Supt. Bernbo Espinosa, his deputy director for operations, flew to General Santos yesterday to lead the investigation.

Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Verzosa ordered the investigation in reaction to an Inquirer report yesterday that said the detainees—co-

VIP, A6

Height of world's tallest building in Dubai still secret

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB Emirates—Dubai is set to open the world's tallest building amid tight security on Monday, celebrating the tower as a bold feat on the world stage despite the city-state's shaky financial footing.

But the final height of the Burj Dubai—Arabic for Dubai Tower—remained a closely guarded secret on the eve of its opening. At a reported height of 818 meters, it long ago vanquished an American rival, the Taipei 101 in Taiwan.

The Burj's record-seeking developers didn't stop there.

The building boasts the most stories and highest occupied floor of any building in the world, and ranks as the world's tallest structure, beating out a television mast in North Dakota. Its observation deck—on floor 124—also sets a record.

"We weren't sure how high we could go," said Bill Baker, the building's structural engineer, who is in Dubai for the inauguration. "It was kind of an exploration ... a learning experience."

Baker, of Chicago-based architecture and engineering firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, said early designs for

HEIGHT, A11

Crame on full alert for Ampatuan trial

By Marlon Ramos
and Julie M. Aurelio

AUTHORITIES HAVE LAID out tight security measures in Camp Crame for today's trial of Andal Ampatuan Jr., the primary suspect in the Nov. 23 mass murder in Maguindanao.

The Philippine National Police yesterday put its main camp under full alert in anticipation of security concerns.

Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 221 will be escorted by policemen from her house to the social hall in Camp Crame that has been transformed into a courtroom for the hearings.

Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego, director of the Quezon City Police District, said the judge's close-in security would come

CRAME, A6

UP, UP AND AWAY Burj Dubai soars over 800 meters in the United Arab Emirates and dwarfs Taipei 101, the world's former tallest skyscraper, by 300 meters. It will be home to the world's first Armani Hotel, and the place of residence, work and leisure of a community of up to 12,000 people. It's the centerpiece of a 200-hectare development in the newly emergent cosmopolitan urban giant choked with skyscrapers.

Second FRONTPAGE
Mobile Alert: Text INQ ON ESSAING to 4467 | Website: www.inquirer.net/mobile | E-mail: pc_news@inquirer.com.ph

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Most Metro and Luzon areas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers, while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy or mostly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Mostly with Rain
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly with Rain
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Surigao	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly with Rain	Butuan	Partly Cloudy

PCSO

6/55	30	1	22	30	30	10
6/49	5	15	18	25	34	39
4D	2	4	6	8	7	3
3D	5	5	1	7	2	7	1
Megalotto 6/45	3	4	7	11	26	29

P5,116,544.60

Free trade bad for Asean, warns solon

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"ALL OUR FEARS HAVE COME TRUE," SAID ARAWAN party-list Rep. Walden Bello, reacting to the launch of the world's biggest free trade area comprising China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) on Jan. 1

The China-Asean Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), heeded by governments as a spur to intraregional trade and investments, cuts import tariffs on about 90 percent of products and offers members access to a combined market of 1.7 billion consumers. Cuba is bigger than the Philippines Union and the North American FTA in terms of trade value and population involved. But it has its detractors.

"We have warned against the detriments of others of free trade agreements with strong economies like China, Japan and the US and Europe," said Bello. "Unfortunately, all our fears have come true.

Bello's credentials

The author of 13 books, Bello is a senior analyst at the Focus for the Global South, a progressive international think tank based in Bangkok. He is a professor (on leave) of sociology at the University of the Philippines and visiting professor at several US universities. His latest book is "Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy."

"Asean has not yet managed to consolidate itself as an economic bloc," Bello told the Inquirer. "We have yet are launching a free trade area with China that will mean eventually bringing our tariffs down to zero. Asean is already noncompetitive with China across a whole range of manufactured goods and agricultural products."

China zooms past US

Agnes Pratsee Penner quoted Sanchem Pachpatanthan, deputy secretary general for the Asean Economic Community, as saying that China had just overtaken the United States as Asean's third largest trading partner and would likely leap past Japan and the EU to become Southeast Asia's another core market within the first few years of the decade.

Under the agreement, the six founding members of Asean—the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Thailand—and China will drop tariffs on Asean goods from 9.8 percent to 0.1 percent, while Asean countries will cut tariffs on Chinese goods from 12.8 percent to 0.6 percent. Other Asean members, Vietnam and Cambodia among them, have until 2015 to agree.up.

Cuba, eight years to the making, is seen by its promoters as an answer to the slowdown in export-led growth. The deadlock in the Uruguay round of global trade talks has given rise to other regional trade blocs. The decline of the US market has also made privileged access in the China market more appealing to emerging economies.

But Bello warns that the China-Asean free trade area will mean acceleration of the erosion of our industry and agriculture owing to very cheap Chinese goods, at the same time that investments will be flowing to China.

Not ready to compete

While proponents of CaFta point to its benefits, some Philippine and Indonesian manufacturers said they were still not ready to compete with very cheap Chinese goods. Textiles and footwear companies are some examples.

"Our World Trade Organization commitments together with FTAs are lumping our economy to its knees, but successive administrations have simply refused to see the handwriting on the wall," Bello said.

"Labor-export dimply a no substitute for a domestic economy that is healthy and able to absorb our growing population."

'Path to economic ruin'

In his article, "China and Southeast Asia: Emerging Problems in an Economic Relationship," Bello said China's rapid growth is often presented as the engine driving Southeast Asian economies but, as the example of the Thailand-China 'early harvest' FTA shows, "complete trade liberalization can be a path to economic ruin."

The first phase of the Cafta, it stressed that the China-Asean relationship was positive. After all, he added, demand from a Chinese economy growing at breakneck pace was a key factor in Southeast Asian growth beginning around 2003 after a period of low growth dependent on domestic demand.

But, Bello said, the picture is more complex. Chinese imports have become increasingly pulling the rest of Southeast Asia along with it in economic nirvana. There have been widespread fears, Bello said that China's growth was, in fact taking place at Southeast Asia's expense.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
Magallanes Drive, Intramuros
1002 MANILA

NOTICE TO ALL FOREIGNERS

All registered foreigners permanent or temporary residents in the **Philippines** are hereby reminded **to report in person** pursuant to **Section 10 of the Alien Registration Act of 1950, within the first sixty (60) days (from January 1 to March 1, 2019)** at the Alien Registration Division (ARD), Bureau of Immigration, Manila, or at the Immigration Clearance Subport Field Sections' office nearest their place of residence.

The following documents shall be presented by the foreigner during the Annual Report (AR):

1. Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) / ACR I-Card;
2. Certificate of Residence (CR); and
3. Official Receipts (O.R.'s) covering payment of previous AR fees.

An **Annual Report fee of P300.00** and **P10.00 Legal Research fee** shall be paid by the foreigner.

The parent or legal guardian of a foreigner who is less than fourteen (14) years of age, shall have the duty of reporting for such foreigner. Provided, that otherwise such foreigner attains his fourteenth birthday in the Philippines, he shall within fifteen (15) days from his 14th birthday apply in person for re-registration and fingerprinting, paying the registration fee and thereafter make his own annual report once a year within the period and at the place above designated.

Aliens who are sixty-five (65) years of age and above may be represented by their legal guardians or legal representatives in complying with the above-mentioned Act.

Where the subject foreigners intend to be represented by a travel agent, broker or liaison officer, the amount of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00) as Express Lane fee shall be charged in addition to the Annual Report and Legal Research fees. The travel agent, broker or liaison officer must present the original ACR I-Card / ACR I-Card of the subject foreigner and a duly notarized Special Power of Attorney (SPA) executed for such purpose.

In all other cases such as change of address and/or updating of information, the same shall be subject to payment of immigration fees and/or fines if applicable.

A foreigner holder of paper-based ACR, whose visa is not exempt from payment of immigration fees, shall not be permitted to make his Annual Report without applying for an ACR I-Card.

Foreigners who fail to comply with provisions of the Alien Registration Act of 1950 are subject to administrative fine and/or imprisonment, at the option of the Commissioner of Immigration.

MARCELINO C. LIBANAN
Commissioner

IMMIGRATION DISTRICT/SUBPORT/FIELD/SATELLITE OFFICES WHERE FOREIGNERS CAN PAY THEIR ANNUAL REPORT 2019

	VISAYAS		MINDANAO

Comelec rates itself an '8' in terms of preparedness

By Jocelyn Ating

DESPITE AUTOMATION JITTERS AND many unanswered questions, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday gave itself a better-than-average score of 8 out of 10 in terms of its readiness to undertake the country's first automated elections this year.

Comelec Chair Andy Bautista told reporters that while he anticipated some hitches, the agency's level of readiness was "satisfactory."

"I will give it (Comelec) an 8 [out of 10]. I'm very confident that there will be automated elections," said Melo.

He said the problems the commission expected to encounter pertained to "physical matters," such as the delivery of ballots, the use, the condition of the ballots, the final list of candidates for the printing of the ballots, and the submission of candidates as election day itself.

Contingency plans

Melo said the commissioners were studying contingency measures to address these problems.

One problem that could arise was the loss or damage of ballot boxes as well as of the new Precinct Count Optical Scanner (PCOS) machines as they are transported to polling places nationwide.

"What if the ballot box is damaged? Perhaps the election inspectors can improvise one. Or what if a ballot is crumpled, or does not fit into the slot, or does not come out of the machine? These will not happen on a large scale but we still have to come out with additional guidelines," Melo said.

Bring back excluded bets

He said the Comelec also faced possible delays if the Supreme Court orders the agency to include on the ballots the names of candidates earlier disqualified by the commission.

"What if the ballots had already been printed and the candidate's name was not included. What will happen in that case?" Melo said.

He said those disqualified should request the Comelec's decision and not appeal to higher authorities so that the poll body would not be "held hostage."

He said the Comelec could simply place all the names of the candidates on the ballots to be cast, but the ballots would be too long and more costly to print.

"We are not saying we are always correct [in disqualifying candidates] but since we decide, we wish they would respect us because we do not take sides," Melo said.

The Comelec, he said, will come out with the final list of candidates on Jan. 7 or 8, while the final list of the groups allowed to run under the party-list system may be released by early next week.

What about dropouts?

Another problem that may arise is when a candidate withdraws or is already on the ballot drops out due to disqualification, death or permanent incapacitation.

Under the election law, a replacement candidate could take the place of that candidate. Melo said the Comelec could include in the printing of the ballots one extra oval for every candidate category.

"But what if there are more than two withdrawers? What if the ovals are shaded by mistake? That's a matter of confusion. If a line is not passed in relation to the oval, we could invoke the Comelec's inherent powers and we shall rule that a vote for the withcandidate would be a vote for his substitute," he said.

The printing of public school teachers who will act as the Board of Election Inspectors during the May 13 polls is another cause for concern.

Melo said training sessions for some 165,000 teachers would be conducted after the various schools' year ends in March.

He justified the length of the training schedule, saying "there is a thing called forgetting. Some may have learned what they will be taught would still be fresh in their minds, because if you give [the training] more than two months or so before election day, some of them might forget."

Teachers on election duty will have access to copy of new tasks, technology/hardware and emphasizing hang, multiple-choice ballots to voters, and operating the new counting machines for the first time.

New law gives young parents, kids a break

CHILDREN BORN TO MINORS WOULD be considered legitimate upon their parents' marriage now that President Macapagal-Arroyo has signed into the law a measure amending the Family Code.

Under Republic Act No. 9858, parents who had children when they were below the marrying age would not need to go through the process of having to adopt their own offspring just so the kids could enjoy the rights of legitimate children, said Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo, principal author of the bill.

The new law allows for the legitimation of children born out of wedlock to parents who were not disqualified from marrying at the time of conception, or were only disqualified because they were under 18 years of age. The children would be considered legitimate once the parents marry.

Under the old Family Code, only children born out of wedlock to parents who were not disqualified from getting married at the time of conception could be legitimized. This effectively excluded those whose parents were barred from getting married because of their youth.

Gunigundo said that with the new law, there would be no more distinction between legitimate and illegitimate siblings and other children in terms of parental authority, support, use of surname and succession rights.

Leila B. Salaverria

TAOS-PUSONG PAGLILINGKOD SA ATING MGA KABAYAN ANG PADALA NG BDO

Bilang pasasalamat sa ating mga Kabayan-- may BDO Easy Asenso, Instant Panalo Promo!

Lalong mapapabilis ang pag-asenso ng ilang masuwerteng Kabayan sa darating na taon! Sa pag-open ng Kabayan Savings Account sa higit na 700 branches ng BDO, wala nang kaba sa pagkuha ng remittance. May chance pang manalo ng SM Supermarket shopping sprees sa first draw: SM Appliance Center shopping sprees sa second draw at isang bagong kotse sa Grand Draw!

Piolo Pascual, Kapamilya pa rin ng BDO

Mulong Disyembre, nagpirmahan ng contract ang isikat na matinee idol na si Piolo Pascual sa BDO. Patuloy siyang magbibigay-saya sa mga OFW families dito at sa mga Kabayan natin abroad.

Bagong Puntahan ng mga Kabayan: Ang Global Pinoy Center sa SM

Sa bagong bukas na SM Global Pinoy Center sa SM Mall of Asia, may BDO booth kung saan pwedeng mag-pera-up at mag-cash ng remittance. At sa mga susunod na SM Global Pinoy Center na magbubukas sa Isetang SM Supermalls, siguradong naroon din ang BDO.

Kakaibang Salubong Para sa mga Kabayan

Ngayong Pasko, 10 sa Kabayan sa Manila ang sasalubungin ng P10,000 isang Kabayan sa Cebu at isang Kabayan sa Davao ang sasalubungin ng P25,000. At isang Kabayan ke sunod ng Manila ang sasalubungin ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, BDO Chairperson Teresita T. Sy at ng P200,000.

Ang BDO Remit, hindi lang daanan ng pera, daan pa sa pag-asenso ng ating mga Kabayan.

BDO - Top Commercial Bank for Overseas Remittance ng 2008 ayon sa Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Mayon alert may be lowered; schoolkids happy to be back

By Mikko Dizon

AN OFFICIAL OF THE PHILIPPINE Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said yesterday the agency may further lower the alert status on Mayon Volcano from the current 3 to 2 "in a week's time" if the erratic volcano showed signs of improvement.

"Depending on what we observe, in a week's time we may lower it to alert level 2. ... If they on shown improvement in its status," said Jimmy Bornas, officer in charge of Phivolcs' Volcano Monitoring and Eruption Prediction Division.

In Legazpi City, students, parents and teachers were happy about the orderly and class discussions that welcomed them as the measures who had suspended them turned them over on Monday.

"They even never thanksgiving messages on the blackboard and we were so happy for what they did," said Ednida Esguera, Bonga Economics teacher at Bonot Elementary School, who was used as a temporary shelter by around 3,000 evacuees.

Bornas said that among the factors being monitored are the ash explosions and the sulfur dioxide content of the flames coming out of Mayon.

"Mayon is still on alert level 3. Since Dec. 20, there haven't been any ash explosions. The surface manifestation is showing weak steaming from the volcano, steaming we can only see white steam, before, the steam was brownish or dirty white," Bornas said in the briefing at the provincial capitol.

Weak steaming suggests "no lava" from the volcano's summit and that the possibility of a major explosion is low, he added.

Shallow magma

Bornas said Mayon continued to emit a high sulfur dioxide content, but measured at more than 2,000 tons per day on Jan. 29, citing because of the shallow magma on the volcano's surface.

It is bulletin yesterday, Phivolcs said the volcano had seven volcanic earthquakes and 39 rockfall events related to the detachment of lava fragments on the volcano's upper slope.

Rock shocks as the natural movement the observation of fragments from the volcano and there was no sulfur dioxide measurement conducted on Sunday because of rains in the area.

Science research specialist Paul Alanis told the Inquirer Monday that if there was something that volcanologists found about Mayon, it was not its intensifying alkaline but rather the so-called "lull before the storm."

"Normally, we observe a six-month observation period before finally declaring that Mayon is normal. But if the trend of activities continues to lessen, the lowering of the alert level might not take that long," Alanis said, adding that "what we do not like to happen is that people are caught nearing the volcano as much as if it had gone back to normal and there is suddenly strikes back with another round of more violent eruptions."

No cleanup needed

John Mark Manuse, 7 year-old Grade 1 student, said: "We were supposed to clean up upon resumption of classes after the volcano alert was lifted, but the former occupants who did the cleaning, we did not have any problems and we immediately proceeded to our classes."

Shelly Benitez, 42, a mother of three, said: "There was no problem with the families such as the chairs and no damage was done to the walls and the lighting. They even wrinkled the floor clean."

Beth de Lumen, a regular caretaker appointed by the Parents-Teachers Association for Grade 1, said: "I assume the maintenance of the rooms and look after the students during playtime and before classes. I am assured that the rooms were well-aired."

Even toilets were scrubbed

"They even took care of our gardens and old plants, and even cleaned the toilets," she said.

Regional Director Filmore Garcia, who is under the Commission on Elections by a purported military report. Bromo's Mayor Silvestre Marco partly-led representative, Teodoro Castillo, said yesterday the case was another attempt by the Aquino administration to strike out 10 hundred artists. "Just like previous disqualification cases filed against us in Comelec and Congress, the complaint filed by acting Director C. Magbanua is a sham. The complainant is a career bureaucrat against who has been showing the MFP's 'Knowing the Enemy' Propaganda presentation around Laguna," said Castillo in a statement. The Comelec starts hearing the disqualification case today. *With reports from Jeannette Andrade in Legazpi City and Gaea Katreena Cabico in Manila*

Samar to defend self in disqualification case

NACIONAL, ISTA PARTY senatorial candidate Reg. Sabir Ocampo will represent himself to the disqualification case filed against him in the Commission on Elections by a purported military report. Ocampo's fellow Bayan Muna party-list representative, Teodoro Castillo, said yesterday the case was another attempt by the Aquino administration to strike out 10 hundred artists. "Just like previous disqualification cases filed against us in Comelec and Congress, the complaint filed by acting Director C. Magbanua is a sham. The complainant is a career bureaucrat against who has been showing the MFP's 'Knowing the Enemy' Propaganda presentation around Laguna," said Castillo in a statement. The Comelec starts hearing the disqualification case today. *With reports from Jeannette Andrade in Legazpi City and Gaea Katreena Cabico in Manila*

Party-list group nominees fight over seat

A PARTY-LIST GROUP is teaming in the Abakada Guro party-list group with its two nominees heading over its lone seat in the House of Representatives. Abakada named the rookie a press statement that Samson Alcantara was taking over the group's House seat from Jonathan de la Cruz who had resigned. De la Cruz was the party-list's nominee since 2016 when the Supreme Court ruled the number of party-list groups entitled to seats in Congress. De la Cruz, behind the press statement, saying the nominee of Abakada's nominee.

But Abakada said De la Cruz had resigned on Dec. 31, 2018, pursuant to a term-sharing agreement with Alcantara. De la Cruz said he was told by the group's lawyer, Benjamin Kalo, that the term-sharing agreement with Alcantara was not approved by Abakada's members. *Latest: Jalvarez*

LPG price slashed by P1/kg

RETAILERS HAVE SLASHED the price of cooking gas by P1 a kilogram beginning today, despite a $15-per-metric ton increase in the international contract price of liquefied petroleum gas. LPG Marketers Association Jerral Ty said member companies decided to cut prices due to a marked decline in domestic demand. "We have decided we needed to reduce prices by P1 per kg today to help our consumers," he said. We would have to absorb the increase and just wait for international prices to soften next month," he said. Today's rollback will bring down the price of an 11-kg LPG tank by P11. With an expected decrease in the international contract price in February, Ty said retailers may further cut prices by P1 per kg within this week or next at the latest. *Joey M. Nanes*

File annual reports, BI reminds aliens

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) yesterday advised all resident foreign nationals in the country that they can file their annual reports in person at BI satellite offices or sub-ports nationwide. Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan made the announcement after seeing the heavy volume of foreigners that flocked to the bureau's main office in Intramuros, Manila, on Monday to file their annual reports. Libanan said he instructed Alien Registration Division chief Dante Kiethela to allow foreigners to file their annual reports in the bureau's satellite offices and sub-ports. He warned that foreigners who fail to file an annual report would be meted out a fine, imprisonment or deportation. "Foreigners making the annual report should bring their Alien Certificate of Registration / Cards, regular certificates of residences / "pasiks" / and official receipts of the report," he said. He said the penalty for failure to file an annual report here is P500 plus a P1 illegal research fee. *Llan Bi at an Page A2 | Jerome Aning*

Pinoy seamen get unexpected bonus

TIMELY FILIPINO SEAMEN scored a windfall recovery after a Greek court ordered the owner of the ship they were cleaning to to pay them more than their annual salaries. The Filipino seamen of Navigo Maritime Monday. Quoting a report from the Philippine Embassy in Athens, the DFA said a Greek court on Dec. 21, 2018, ordered that the salaries of the ship's crew be calculated on the Greek wage standard which was about four times higher than the salaries stipulated in the seamen's contracts. The Filipino crew sought the assistance of the embassy after ingoing. Seamen with the names of Ma-DFO Arlina Sison and their alleged relatives and agents. The Filipino seamen from Navigo Maritime: Cyrel Mendiola, Dandiando Cubay, Florito Labaco, Elihan Moreno, Julius Cesar Flores, Richard Gaviola, Wilfredo Ranara, Primo Fernandez, Emilio Dilang and Jerry Lardio. *Cynthia D. Balana*

Erap longtime adviser UP dean De Guzman, 79

From page B1

"President Estrada has lost not only a great adviser but also a brother and a dear friend," Estrada's spokesperson Ricardo Gabrido said.

According to Gabrido, Estrada credits Dr. Guzman as being one of those responsible for his success as a politician, having been his adviser since he first ran for mayor of San Juan City.

Dr. Guzman suffered a stroke on Dec. 22 and died yesterday at Lorenzo Ilocson Medical Center in San Juan City.

Estrada appointed the man, who served as dean of the UP College of Public Administration for a decade, as his presidential adviser for development administration when he became president in 1998.

Estrada said: "Estrada...who was deposed by a people's uprising in 2001...removed of plunder in 2007, and is again seeking the presidency in 2016;...man, greatly saddened by Dr. Guzman's death.

Importance of surveys

Salcedo said it was Dr. Guzman who broached to Estrada the idea of conducting political surveys to gauge his chances of winning.

"President Estrada recalls that it was Dean Dr. Guzman who influenced him on the importance of surveys, considering use for the then-neophyte politician based he can for mayor in 1987," Salcedo said.

Dr. Guzman, a professor of public administration, served as director of the Local Government Center at the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration from 1968 to 1973. He became dean of the college from 1973 to 1982.

Dr. Guzman was UP vice president for planning and finance from 1982 to 1985. He was appointed chairman of the UP Los Baños in 1985 and was later named to the university's board of regents.

He was a professorial chair in at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance.

Dr. Guzman chaired the Ramon Magsaysay Awards Foundation in February 2000, named as "honoring educational opportunities for the poor and underprivileged but deserving Muslim youth and students of the Philippines."

He also headed the Raul P. de Guzman Foundation Professorial Chair to "inspire scholarly works and commitment to careers in the University of the Philippines."

PLDT, SMC director

Dr. Guzman also sustained the Elena M. Bautgardines Professorial Chair in Local Governance aimed at promoting efficient and responsive local governance.

Dr. Guzman, who was also a director of the Philippine Long Distance Co., and the San Miguel Corp., obtained both master's degree in public administration and doctorate in government from the Florida State University in 1966 and 1967.

He graduated magna cum laude with a degree in foreign service from the UP College of Liberal Arts in 1962.

Dr. Guzman is survived by his wife Ida, and children Marissa, Rodrigo, Antonio, Ricardo and Diego.

Interdigital services will be held this afternoon at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance. He remains will lie in state in the Sanctuario de San Jose in Mount Carmello, San Juan. Cremation has been scheduled for tomorrow.

House still at it, makes final bid for Cha-cha bill

From page B1

concerns about the need for amending the Constitution, the manner of proposing such amendments has been plagued by many problems.

In calling campaign against Cha-cha has developed based largely on the issue that the incumbent crop of legislators should not take the lead in effecting constitutional change as they motives are suspect.

Some of the objections to President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to seek a congressional seat in 2013 is the suspicion that once in the House, she would push for Charter change to bring about a shift to a parliamentary system where she could then be in a position to take the prime ministership.

Politicians seeking the presidency or Senate seats also oppose Charter change because then terms of office may be cut short by any constitutional changes.

For a conservational system has to be called, a vote of two-thirds of all the members of Congress is needed. But it is still unclear as to whether the two chambers should vote in joint session and jointly or separately.

Priority measures

Nograles has limited 15 measures he top priority in the 14th Congress' last session, from Jan. 14 to Feb. 1.

They include bills on free legal assistance; the proposed Department of Social and Anti-Money Laundering Law; instituting a self-monitoring fiscal management program, and reforms in local administration.

Priority bills that are in the committees are those proposing an electricity reduction rate; a Commission regulatory fee and installation of an electric metering device for reference; the Public Operator Transition Law of 2007; the development of the cluster system natural gas industry; farmland as collateral; modernization of the healthcare delivery system; a national student loan program; rationalization of tuition increases; a magna carta for students; and a fair competition, or anti-trust, law.

Special session

Nograles said he was amenable to a proposal from Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile for Congress to hold a special session as many time would be needed to work on the bills that Malacañang wants Congress to approve this year.

"First, we must get the House to agree to the proposal," he said. "Second, they must identify what particular measures they want to take up in the 60 a special session. Third, we should be able to assess how our peers who have not met get enough water bodies to attend," the Speaker said.

NEWSBRIEFS

Ex-actor is acting DENR secretary

A FORMER ACTOR who starred in the 1980s TV drama "Tagpi" is the acting secretary of the environment. Gloria Quinto, until yesterday an undersecretary at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said he would continue to "practicing environmentalism" in the months that he has until the end of President Macapagal-Arroyo's term. Quinto took over from Lito Atienza who resigned to run for mayor of Manila. Quinto said he would look into the issuance by Atienza of a permit that allowed the Boracay Resort Corp. resort to build over coral reefs on the world famous island. *Nikko Dizon*

Sabar to defend self in disqualification case

NACIONAL, ISTA PARTY senatorial candidate Reg. Sabir Ocampo will represent himself to the disqualification case filed against him in the Commission on Elections by a purported military report. Ocampo's fellow Bayan Muna party-list representative, Teodoro Castillo, said yesterday the case was another attempt by the Aquino administration to strike out 10 hundred artists. "Just like previous disqualification cases filed against us in Comelec and Congress, the complaint filed by acting Director C. Magbanua is a sham. The complainant is a career bureaucrat against who has been showing the MFP's 'Knowing the Enemy' Propaganda presentation around Laguna," said Castillo in a statement. The Comelec starts hearing the disqualification case today. *With reports from Jeannette Andrade in Legazpi City and Gaea Katreena Cabico in Manila* *Gil C. Cabreros-Garcia*

LPG price slashed by P1/kg

RETAILERS HAVE SLASHED the price of cooking gas by P1 a kilogram beginning today, despite a $15-per-metric ton increase in the international contract price of liquefied petroleum gas. LPG Marketers Association Jerral Ty said member companies decided to cut prices due to a marked decline in domestic demand. "We have decided we needed to reduce prices by P1 per kg today to help our consumers," he said. We would have to absorb the increase and just wait for international prices to soften next month," he said. Today's rollback will bring down the price of an 11-kg LPG tank by P11. With an expected decrease in the international contract price in February, Ty said retailers may further cut prices by P1 per kg within this week or next at the latest. *Joey M. Nanes*

File annual reports, BI reminds aliens

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) yesterday advised all resident foreign nationals in the country that they can file their annual reports in person at BI satellite offices or sub-ports nationwide. Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan made the announcement after seeing the heavy volume of foreigners that flocked to the bureau's main office in Intramuros, Manila, on Monday to file their annual reports. Libanan said he instructed Alien Registration Division chief Dante Kiethela to allow foreigners to file their annual reports in the bureau's satellite offices and sub-ports. He warned that foreigners who fail to file an annual report would be meted out a fine, imprisonment or deportation. "Foreigners making the annual report should bring their Alien Certificate of Registration / Cards, regular certificates of residences / "pasiks" / and official receipts of the report," he said. He said the penalty for failure to file an annual report here is P500 plus a P1 illegal research fee. *Llan Bi at an Page A2 | Jerome Aning*

Pinoy seamen get unexpected bonus

TIMELY FILIPINO SEAMEN scored a windfall recovery after a Greek court ordered the owner of the ship they were cleaning to to pay them more than their annual salaries. The Filipino seamen of Navigo Maritime Monday. Quoting a report from the Philippine Embassy in Athens, the DFA said a Greek court on Dec. 21, 2018, ordered that the salaries of the ship's crew be calculated on the Greek wage standard which was about four times higher than the salaries stipulated in the seamen's contracts. The Filipino crew sought the assistance of the embassy after ingoing. Seamen with the names of Ma-DFO Arlina Sison and their alleged relatives and agents. The Filipino seamen from Navigo Maritime: Cyrel Mendiola, Dandiando Cubay, Florito Labaco, Elihan Moreno, Julius Cesar Flores, Richard Gaviola, Wilfredo Ranara, Primo Fernandez, Emilio Dilang and Jerry Lardio. *Cynthia D. Balana*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 1, 2019
Solemn Epiphanies
Julian Tomasuma

1st Reading: 1 Jn 6:7, 10
Gospel: Mk 6:34-44

As Jesus went ashore he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

It was now getting late, so his disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place and it is now late. We should send the people away and let them go to the farms and villages around here to buy them some something to eat."

Jesus replied, "You yourselves give them something to eat." They answered, "If we are to give them food, we must go and buy two hundred silver coins worth of bread." But Jesus said, "You have some loaves. How many do you have?" The disciples found out and said, "There are five loaves and two fish."

Then he told them to have the people sit down together in groups on the green grass. They they sat in groups of hundreds and fifties. And Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and, looking up to heaven, he pronounced a blessing, broke the loaves and handed the two fish to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them.

They all ate and everyone had enough. The disciples gathered up what was left and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces of bread and fish. Five thousand men had eaten there.

Commentary:
"How much bread do you have?"
Jesus asked.
And they told him, five loaves
and two fishes...
And everyone ate and had enough."
It is not how much we have
to fill that void.
What counts is how we multiply it
by giving it away.

Copyright © 2019 Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Inquirer.net, INQ.PH, Post-It, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Philippine Inquirer

Ladlad: Gay not immoral

AFTER BEING DE-listed twice by the Commission on Elections (Comelec), the gay group Ang Ladlad has taken to struggle for recognition as a party-list group to the Supreme Court.

In a 35-page petition filed by its spokesperson Jonas Bersola, a leader of the group, asked the high tribunal to nullify the Comelec resolutions disqualifying the Ladlad from the party-list election and compel the Comelec to place the group's name on the ballots that will be printed starting on Jan. 25.

Ang Ladlad argued that the Comelec violated its right to its sexual orientation and equal protection under the law when the poll body turned down its petition for party-list accreditation on the grounds that the group promoted doctrines "contrary to public morals."

Ang Ladlad said that homosexuality was not a crime. It accused the Comelec of upholding a certain religious doctrine when it regarded homosexuality with immorality...a violation of the Constitution's guarantee of the separation of church and state.

"It may not be unjust to say... that homosexuality per se does not fall within the ambit of the penal law...That one's affection towards people of the same sex could manifest in lust and immorality is also not only a assumption," the group.

Ang Ladlad cited United States to supraforum wherein the US Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional Texas' homosexual conduct law that criminalized sodomy between consenting adults.

The group said the US Supreme Court upheld "decisions centered on individual autonomy" as something protected by the equal protection clause under the US Constitution's 14th Amendment.

"This court's obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate its own moral code." Ang Ladlad quoted the US Supreme Court as saying. Harrison Bordadora

SLIMMERS WORLD

BUY 1 MONTH GET 1 MONTH FREE!

PLUS! Personal Training and all the Latest Aerobics!

SPECIAL OFFER
GOOD UNTIL 10PM TONIGHT!!!

CORE POWER + BIOMETRICS

I Lost 51 lbs.!
Runner-Up in the Great Body Contest.
Cedric Vladimir Dy

BEFORE:

Great Body, Great Skin.

I Lost 44 lbs.!
Won the Great Body Contest.
Christine Hermoso

BEFORE:

"All our full programmes are guaranteed!"

CALL NOW FOR YOUR FREE CONSULTATION!!!

- NO MONTHLY DUES ON LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP!
- NO JOINING FEES!
- CREDIT CARD OPTIONS AT 0%
- MEDICAL SUPERVISION AT ALL CENTERS

BUY 15 TREATMENTS GET 15 FREE!

SPECIAL OFFER
GOOD UNTIL 10PM TONIGHT!!!

Diamond Facial

FACIAL WITH DIAMOND ULTRAPEEL to give you a flawless skin.

CALL OUR ONE - STOP SUPER CENTERS FOR FITNESS, SKIN, BODY AND FACE.

FITNESS HOTLINE: 536-3333
SKIN HOTLINE: 525-8771
MOBILE NUMBER: 091- SLIMMERS (7546377)

www.slimmersworld.com.ph * inquire@slimmersworld.com.ph

Ampatuan mansion target of mortar, grenade attack

By Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—THE MAJOR home of former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr. in Shariff Aguak was subjected to recent mortar attacks on Saturday night, the acting police chief of Maguindanao said.

One man was reported injured, and the attacks, which occurred in succession, created panic among the residents, Senior Supt. Alex Lemuel said.

According to Lemuel, an M-79 grenade was launched from somewhere and landed at the back of a mosque in the compound of Ampatuan's mansion at about 10 p.m. on Sunday.

The mosque has been guarded by Army soldiers since December 5, when the Ampatuan patriarch was arrested and taken to Davao City.

Lemuel said that while police and military troops were examining the blast site, another M-79 grenade exploded in the backyard of the Pelicula gas station some 100 meters from the mansion.

Pangalusian Baris, 30, whose house is near the gas station, was wounded in the left arm.

The gas station is owned by Datu Unsay Mayor Samsudin Ampatuan Jr. It closed shop after the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people in Ampatuan, Maguindanao.

Mansion prime target

The mayor is the primary suspect in the massacre and is being held at the National Bureau of Investigation headquarters in Manila.

Lemuel said he was not sure if the attacks were connected to the Ampatuan attacks.

But since the Ampatuan mansion was the primary target and then the attacker might have miscalculated in firing the grenade launcher.

Lemuel said the attacks could have been perpetrated by members of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

But MILF civil-military chief Eid Kabalu denied this. He said his group was at odds with the Ampatuans and had nothing to do with the attacks.

"We have nothing to gain in doing that," Kabalu told the Inquirer by phone.

Nightly robberies

Najib Bonyan Moxir Tahib Ampatuan, who lives in Shariff Aguak, said a robbery had been reported in the capital town every night since last week. (See story in Across the Nation, Page A7.)

"There was a robbery attempt on my house that was thwarted by the timely arrival of policemen on patrol," Ampatuan said.

Without identifying the purported robbers, the mayor said their targets were the Ampatuan mansions in Shariff Aguak.

He said the firing of grenades at Ampatuan Sr.'s mansion was carried out apparently because of the football-field's elevation.

GRENADE ATTACK This photo taken on Dec. 6, 2009, shows the facade of the mansion of Andal Ampatuan Sr. in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, which came under a grenade attack on Monday

VIP treatment of Ampatuans in CIDG compound probed

From page A1

dueling Zaldy Ampatuan, the suspended governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao—were being allowed the use of their mobile phones, entered food and a headrest to clean up their cell inside Camp Bgdn. Gen. Lim Jr. here.

Palace: Don't coddle them

Malacañang said the authorities should not coddle the detained Ampatuans, who are among the suspects in the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao province.

Cerge Remonde, spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said authorities should "make sure the rules are being followed for them not differently than anyone else being held in custody."

"We keep saying that we have the same principle—equal application of the law, equal application of regulations for everyone in this particular case," Olivar told reporters.

Agnes Devanadera, Zaldy Ampatuan, two of his brothers (Maguindanao Provincial Board Member and former acting governor Sajid Ampatuan and Shariff Aguak Mayor Anwar Ampatuan) and their cousin (Maguindanao Vice Gov. Akmad Ampatuan) are detained at the CIDG lockup.

Bombo Radyo account

The CIDG probe team headed by Estipona first met with Bombo Radyo reporters Jaime "Jim" Salinas and Joel Ebargo at the General Santos City Police Office to obtain their sworn statements.

Galvez, the Bombo Radyo chief of operations, had told the Inquirer that he, Estipona and Jim Salinas were Zaldy and Sajid Ampatuan's co-Dec. 31 (3 a.m.) detainees at the CIDG office.

The two men were at a long table on which were several plastic bags of food, and that the two Ampatuans were seated next to them.

Galvez said when the police arrived, the Ampatuans were escorted to their custody, not to cells, the CIDG compound," Estipona said.

He said the investigation would get the role of the CIDG personnel on duty as well as that of the Ampatuans, "to the fact."

Transfer request

Estipona said the CIDG had been requesting the transfer of the suspects but that a court order would be needed.

"Their detention here is just temporary. The CIDG lockup facility is not designed for prolonged detention," Estipona said.

In fact, he said, the continued detention of the Ampatuans here was putting an additional burden on the CIDG. "They can no longer perform their job because they are being monitored," he said.

Aside from those deployed at the main gate of Camp Pedro G. Lim Jr., personnel from the special weapons and tactics team are posted in the CIDG compound.

Asked about the matter after yesterday's flag-raising ceremony at Camp Crame in Quezon City, PNP chief Verzosa backed the proposed transfer of the detained suspects to Camp Crame.

"Bringing them here would be better because there would be less movement [during the trial of their cases]," he told reporters.

Verzosa said the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame could relieve manpower requirements.

He said another detention facility in Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan City could also hold relieve manpower requirements.

Asked if he would recommend the transfer of the Ampatuans, Verzosa said: "It's really up to the DOJ. We will just support them and follow their requests."

Fairness assured

Senator Sen. Pedro Aquino, the CIDG director in United Nations, said he was in Bicutan to check the personnel assigned to the detainees' quarters.

"I just wanted to assure [Ampatuans] that they will be treated fairly," Aquino said.

He said the Ampatuans were detained at the CIDG lockup.

Bombo Radyo account

The CIDG probe team headed by Estipona first met with Bombo Radyo reporters Jaime "Jim" Salinas and Joel Ebargo at the General Santos City Police Office to obtain their sworn statements.

Galvez, the Bombo Radyo chief of operations, had told the Inquirer that he, Estipona and Jim Salinas were Zaldy and Sajid Ampatuan's co-Dec. 31 (3 a.m.) detainees at the CIDG office.

The two men were at a long table on which were several plastic bags of food, and that the two Ampatuans were seated next to them.

"I think the people should make an effort so their concerns would be heeded," Pimentel said in a phone interview.

Unlawful

Equally displeased by the report was Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who said the proposed VIP treatment accorded to the detained Ampatuans was "unlawful" and "demoralizing [and] unconstitutional ... insulting to living victims to the victims of the Maguindanao carnage."

"The Arroyo [administration] has been trying to show to the whole world that it is serious about going after the perpetrators of the massacre, but this report of special treatment seems to be telling Pangilinan sending a bad message.

He called on the Philippine National Police to ensure that "there are no special treat," and that "there is equal treatment of all accused in the custody."

"The allegations do not help the Arroyo [administration] and only add to the suspicion that it is indeed coddling the Ampatuans in exchange political allies," Pangilinan said.

Chrisee Cruz, Associated Press

Pimentel not surprised by special treatment

SENATE MINORITY LEADER Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday said he was not surprised by the report that members of the Ampatuan clan suspected of mass killings in Maguindanao province appeared to be receiving special treatment from their custodians.

"They have a royal palace residing in Malacañang," Pimentel said in apparent reference to President Macapagal-Arroyo, a political ally of the Ampatuans clan.

"I think the people should make an effort so their concerns would be heeded," Pimentel said in a phone interview.

Unlawful

Equally displeased by the report was Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who said the proposed VIP treatment accorded to the detained Ampatuans was "unlawful" and "demoralizing [and] unconstitutional ... insulting to living victims to the victims of the Maguindanao carnage."

"The Arroyo [administration] has been trying to show to the whole world that it is serious about going after the perpetrators of the massacre, but this report of special treatment seems to be telling Pangilinan sending a bad message.

He called on the Philippine National Police to ensure that "there are no special treat," and that "there is equal treatment of all accused in the custody."

"The allegations do not help the Arroyo [administration] and only add to the suspicion that it is indeed coddling the Ampatuans in exchange political allies," Pangilinan said.

Chrisee Cruz, Associated Press

Crame on full alert for Ampatuan trial

From page A1

from Camp Crame's Police Security and Protection Group as well as the CIDG.

Supreme Court spokesperson Midas Marquez said only 30 accredited journalists would be allowed to cover the CIDG compound for information to use in the proceedings.

"Even those considered as the litigants and their relatives, counsel, recently promoted and accredited media shall be given priority in entering the courtroom," Marquez said in a news briefing in Camp Crame.

No live coverage

Despite requests from various sectors, live media coverage of the hearings will not be allowed "to avoid trial by publicity," Marquez said.

He said the ban "was issued to ensure that the accused will be given a fair and impartial trial, a vital right that constitutional rights are respected."

Senior Supt. Gordon Dreyer, chief of Camp Crame's Headquarters Support Service, said 300 policemen would be deployed in the camp.

But only 50 will be permitted to carry firearms because "to avoid any untoward incident," he said.

Dreyer said 30 unarmed police officers would also be assigned inside the courtroom.

No ID, no entry

"The no ID, no entry policy will be strictly implemented, along with the strict inspection of attaches," Dreyer said.

He said personnel of the National Capital Regional Police Office and the National Bureau of Investigation "would ensure the safety and security of the trial [at] the Regional Trial Court Branch 221 in Quezon City."

"A 52-M [Civil Disturbance Management] contingent will be on guard to control protestors and respond to any eventualities," Dreyer said.

Petition for bail

Judge Reyes is to hear today pending motions filed by lawyer Sigfrid Fortun in connection with the multiple murder charges lodged against Ampatuan Jr., the mayor of Datu Unsay.

Among these motions is the accused's petition for bail, originally submitted in a Cotabato City court but eventually transferred to Quezon City upon the order of the Supreme Court.

At least employees of Branch 221 said no date had been set for the arraignment and no criminal case had been received by the court as of 3 p.m. yesterday.

Another accused Datu Unsay Mayor Samsudin Ampatuan Jr. is in detention in Camp Crame.

Reyes had set the hearing of Ampatuan Jr.'s petition for bail on Jan. 11.

The court will take note for the state's motion that Department of Justice officials be directed to explain why they should not be cited for contempt for taking Ampatuan Jr. out of his cell without the court's permission on Dec. 18.

Some lawmakers that Crame was no purpose for Ampatuan Jr.'s presence at the CIDG that day.

Those named in the motion were Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, Chief State Prosecutors Jovencito Zuño Jr., Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony, Senior State Prosecutors Leo Dacera and Susanne Belarmino, State Prosecutors Emmanuel Velasco and Levinne Cuevas, NBI lawyers Ricardo Diaz and Raul Bolivar, and lawyer Julius Ceniza.

Branch 221 is currently handling 11 murder cases against Ampatuans, for the killing of seven journalists and passersby on Nov. 23 in Ampatuan, Maguindanao.

The handmade case was raised first in Reyes' cube after Judge Lucilo Cortez, of branch 164 in Pasig, refused to handle the case, saying he had other commercial cases on hand.

75 Hill escorts

The MILF has dismissed a rash of reports about the safety of Ampatuan Jr. while he is being transported to Camp Crame.

MILF director Hector Marcelino tapped local agent Bahnal Agguilon, the barangay chief of the Pedtad Operations Division, to lead the 75-man MILF escort.

It is composed of Bantsa personnel from the offices of the Intelligence Services, the Technical Services, and the National Capital Region.

Bantsa Leader, the MILF's deputy director for Intelligence Services, said some 75 operatives had been tapped for the job of escorting Ampatuan Jr. to and from Camp Crame.

"This is going to be tougher.... We are 100-percent sure that we will bring Andal to Camp Crame safe and back to his detention cell at the Bicutan safehouse," Unabia said.

He said Ampatuan Jr. would be using a bullet-proof vehicle.

With a report from Inquirer I. Andrade

MARLYNE LUCIA PARAGAS
Manila Bureau chief
Mailing Address: Inquirer Plaza
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000
Fax No. (02) 896-6214
E-mail: mlp_inquirer@yahoo.com.ph

ANTHONY LUCIA PARAGAS
Iloilo Bureau chief
Mailing Address: Iloilo Provincial Capitol Building
Tel. No. (033) 336-1000
E-mail: alp_inquirer@yahoo.com.ph

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

VERNA BUAN
12th Flr., Inquirer II, 901 Ortigas Ave. Extension, Mandaluyong City
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000
Fax No. (02) 721-1892
E-mail: vbuan@inquirer.com.ph

MARIA MERCEDES
9/F Building Corp. Bldg., 5 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City
Tel. No. (02) 896-6000
Fax No. (02) 896-6214
E-mail: mmcastro@inquirer.com.ph

Weather expert says RP should prepare for long, hot summer

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—AFTER BEING submerged in floods last year, Pangasinan and some parts of the country will experience a long, hot summer this year, an official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Nathaniel Cruz, Pagasa weather services bureau head, said while the country has been experiencing cold weather since December, the weather has not been as cold as in December 2008 because of the El Niño (dry spell).

The country has been experiencing El Niño since September and may continue to feel it until June, he said.

Cruz was in this city on Monday to brief the city council on Pagasa's programs on preparedness and mitigation for extreme weather conditions.

"It could be a long, hot summer. The rainy season may come late, maybe in the last week of May or first week of June, instead of April," he said.

He said Pagasa has started working with the Department of Agriculture to discuss mitigation measures as the country's agriculture sector will be severely hit by the dry spell.

Because of El Niño, as typhoon is expected to enter the Philippines in the first half of 2010, he said, adding that the country will experience fewer typhoons even in the second half of the year.

About 20 typhoons enter the country every year and "we are expecting less than that number this year," Cruz said.

But he cautioned about much stronger weather disturbances this year.

"It does not mean that fewer typhoons means 'weaker ones.' Some could be as strong as 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng,'" he said.

Tropical Storm "Ondoy" caused massive flooding in Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog in September while Tropical Depression "Pepeng," which hit the country three times, flooded more than 30 towns and cities in Pangasinan in October.

"We should always be prepared because climate change may cause more terrible typhoons," Cruz said.

Gunmen sow terror in Maguindanao town

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao—Fear is gripping residents of this town after a succession of armed and attempted robberies hit homes here.

The armed holes were believed to be perpetrated by members of a militia that was shortlisted with the Ampatuan clan but has been disbanded following the mass murder of 57 people in Ampatuan town.

On New Year's Eve, police said they thwarted an attempt to rob the house of Sakah Ampatuan, mayor of Rajah Buayan town.

Supt. Alexis Leuterio, Maguindanao police chief, said at least 20 heeled men were seen crawling in the mayor's house but fled when police arrived.

But Sarimsim Ayabedin, acting Maguindanao governor, said she met with police and other local officials now peace and security in the province.

Sowing terror

Early yesterday, unidentified armed men broke into the house of a certain Norudin Kakim, a truck owner. Relatives said the masked gunmen beat up Kakim with Armalite rifles after taking cell phones, jewelry and money from Kakim's house.

A helper in Kakim's house said a grenade exploded earlier at the back of the house near the Shariff Aguak Automotive warehouse here.

Residents said they believed the same group that robbed Kakim's family was also behind the armed robberies in several homes here.

Yakob Ampatuan's name is on the list of more than 500 officials and individuals charged with rebellion in a government bid to pin them down for the Nov. 23 mass murders.

But Abakir's relatives said the attempted robbery on the mayor's house was not related to the case.

Appeal for soldiers

Rasuly Uakmeraliyev Dimnatin Ampatuan, younger brother of the mayor, confirmed the attempted armed burglary and asked government to help restore peace and order by sending back soldiers here.

Military presence in the town was scaled down after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted martial law in Maguindanao on Dec. 11.

But Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao Command, said the military didn't pull out.

On Sunday residents said government forces exchanged fire with gunmen scaling the fence of an extension office of Jaddy Uy Ampatuan, Ampatuan Region in Muslim Mindanao governor, who is being held on criminal charges for his alleged involvement in the mass murder.

Maguindanao Rep. Simeon Datumanong asked government to bring the military back to the province.

Masked men

Residents said they couldn't say which group was responsible for the robberies because the gunmen were masked.

But a text message circulating here said that men, members of the disbanded civilian volunteers' organization (CVO), which had technically served as the Ampatuans' private army.

The same text message opined a former police official who is now under review for the Nov. 23 mass murder, is being behind the gunmen. The officer is now on bail. Inquirer Mindanao

PINOY ENTERPRISE
Everything one needs—insurance, rice, eggs, cooking gas, dental services, photo printing to phone load—are under one roof, proof of the entrepreneurial spirit of the Filipino. Store found at the town proper of Pena, Pampanga. (TONY BURGONIA/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON)

₱260-M reclamation in Aklan town a go, says gov

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE P260-MILLION reclamation project in the Caticlan port in Malay, Aklan, would start this year in preparation for more tourists on Boracay Island, Aklan Gov. Carlito Marquez said.

Marquez said in a phone interview on Monday that the project, covering 2.6 hectares of property near the Caticlan port, would host tourist-tourism projects aimed at decongesting Boracay Island and its preparation for more tourists on the island.

Caticlan is the main jump-off point to Boracay and hosts the lone airport closest to the island.

Marquez said the project, which would be completed in 18 years, would involve the construction of office buildings for tourists, travel agencies, utilities, banks and other companies.

It would also host open, a hospital, passenger lounges and other offices to support the P13.66-billion tourism industry in Boracay.

Marquez said it was earlier projected that tourist arrivals in Boracay would reach 4 million this year but this was moved to 2015 because of the impact of the global economic crisis.

The Aklan provincial government will finance the project from the proceeds of a ₱260-million bond flotation scheduled in the first quarter of 2010.

DDB: Samar drug seizures saved 1M users

By Chito O. Aragon
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE RETURN OF 200 SPIKES of cocaine so far in Samar is one of the country's biggest contributions to the international campaign against illegal drugs in 2009 as it saved a million likely drug users, according to a top anti-drug official.

Ted Clarence Domingo, Dangerous Drugs Board vice chair, said an average drug user consumes 0.01 to 0.02 gram of cocaine per session.

Each gram of cocaine, he said, could be shared by at least five users. A cocaine brick weighing a kilogram, therefore, could be consumed by at least 5,000 drug users.

The 200 cocaine bricks seized by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the waters of Samar saved at least a million would-be drug users.

Domingo personally stayed in the Leyte-Samar area to monitor and supervise the cocaine retrieval rebuilt, as of last count, has reached more than 180 bricks.

Operation had been monitored in Eastern Samar and Northern Samar, government agents also likewise seized 16 kg of cocaine in Davao City last December.

DAVAO CITY officials, led by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, present several bricks of cocaine seized Dec. 11 at the city's container yard. (ARIEL SEBASTIAN/INQUIRER MINDANAO)

The Davao haul would have been consumed by at least 75,000 drug users, he said.

Philippine anti-narcotics agents might not have the best technology and logistics but they definitely achieved these mission, he said.

In past years, PDEA, PNP and the National Bureau of Investigation have dismantled more than a dozen clandestine shabu (methamphetamine) laboratories nationwide, he said.

"It is likewise beyond argument (that) more than 70 percent of detainees in our jails nationwide are facing drug cases, evidence that our endeavors are indeed arresting drug offenders," Domingo said.

Police continued to arrest pushers, although many of them were considered small fry.

In a buy-bust operation in Bohol, Laguna, on Saturday police said they arrested four persons—Nick Salvador, 31; Alber Tin, 30; Andrew Bautista, 40; and Rolando Ramos, 28.

Police said the four sold shabu to undercover agents.

With a report from Marlynne Glass, Inquirer Southern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

■ TUGUEGARAO CITY

Cop fires gun on New Year's Eve, faces rap

A METCO Manila policeman was charged with grave threats for firing a gun during New Year's Eve revelry in Sta. Ana, Cagayan, his hometown.

Chief Supt. Roberto Dennis, Cagayan Valley police chief, said PO1 Ronie Jusay, of the National Capital Region Police Office, was caught firing his 9-mm service pistol in Barangay Ventenilla on Dec. 31. Vilmarc Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ ILOILO CITY

Comelec puts closure on Iloilo poll protest

THE COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) en banc has dismissed with finality the election protest against Mayor Juan Mabaras of Alimodian, Iloilo.

The Comelec Electoral Contests Adjudication Department has recorded the case in its Book of Entry of Judgments, putting closure to the petition filed by Ramon Espinosa, who contested results of the 2007 local elections in 117 out of 128 single and clustered precincts in Alimodian.

Alimodian obtained 9,736 votes while Espinosa got 8,267 votes, or a margin of 483 votes. David Israel Sinap, Inquirer Visayas

■ BOHOL, Murcia Region

Execs prepare for El Niño effects on hogs

THIS ISLAND province is bracing for the adverse effects of El Niño on its hog industry.

Dr. Jesse Victoria, Bohol provincial veterinarian, said the provincial government is currently bringing in more boars for breeding.

He said aside from refraining from feed cutter, pigs were likely to reproduce less during El Niño, a weather phenomenon characterized by a prolonged dry spell and high temperatures.

Murrah buffalo boys are sought after because the province was certified as free from hoof-and-mouth disease, said Victoria. David Emer R. Dumalin, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ EVENTS

Sign language conlab

HEARING-impaired individuals from northern Luzon will gather in the country's summer capital to attend their annual Sign Language Convention on Jan. 8-10 at the Baguio Convention Center.

The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in the Philippines, the convention's host, said Jehovah's Witnesses, and the three-day convention intends to foster camaraderie among deaf individuals and provide spiritual and practical counsel not only to the hearing impaired but also to their relatives and friends.

Admission is free and all sessions are open to the public.

Watch Tower has been conducting free sign language classes for the deaf.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Superfluous

THE CREATION OF A SEVEN-MAN COMMISSION assigned to dismantle private armies before the May elections has met with mixed reactions. President Macapagal-Arroyo's allies in Congress expectedly welcomed the naming of the members of the commission. Others, like Senate Commission on Elections Chair Christian Monsod, were not impressed by the commission's purported broad powers.

EDITORIAL

Monsod said he understood that the commission is only a recommendatory body, and if that is so, "it's not going to be very useful." Bataan Rep. Teofilo Guingona III said the commission's assignment to study the problem of private armies is "a redundancy" because their existence is already a matter of public knowledge. He urged government forces to go after the private armies, which he said are illegal, and stop discussing them.

Monsod and Guingona are right. If the main purpose of the commission is to study the problem of private armies and make recommendations, then it is wasting precious time that could be used instead to immediately bear down on the private armies and dismantle them before they can create havoc in the May elections. It is already established that private armies are illegal; the thing to do now is to go after these illegal groups, break them up and disarm them.

The President, as commander in chief, should order the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to immediately dismantle the private armies. The process of dismantling the private army of the Ampatuans in Maguindanao is under way, and this is being done even without the special commission. Why can't a similar operation be undertaken in other areas where private armies are known to exist?

Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales recently cited intelligence reports of heavy purchases of weapons by local politicians. He said at least 132 private armies exist in various parts of the country, armed with close to a million loose firearms.

One million loose firearms constitute a lot of firepower. They're enough to start a nationwide war. What's the government, and particularly the AFP and the PNP, doing about this? Are they waiting for a conflagration to break out before they act?

Ifth Arroyo's spokesperson Gary Olivar said the permanent dismantling of private armies is "a tall order." Indeed, it is a very difficult task, considering that private armies have been in existence for nearly six decades and have become permanent fixtures during elections. Private armies have been used by politicians to intimidate and kill their political opponents and to terrorize voters into voting for them.

Instead of forming a commission, it would have been better if the President had acted directly ordering the AFP and the PNP to wage a nationwide campaign to seek out the private armies, arrest and prosecute those suspected of having killed or wounded people in the past, confiscate all their loose firearms, and seize other guns pending verification of how they came into the possession of these armed groups. This has been done in Maguindanao; there is no reason to believe that a similar operation cannot be done in other areas in the country, provided the President is determined to exercise political will and act decisively to stamp out this bane in Philippine politics.

Will she do it? Or is she merely grandstanding to show her concern over the evil influence of private armies on national politics? She owes a lot to private armies. She owes a lot particularly to the Ampatuans, political dynasty and to private army, which made it possible for her to amass a huge lead over opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in Maguindanao in 2004 and for the administration senatorial slate to lead also in Maguindanao in 2007.

But since it appears that the President's order creating the six-man commission can no longer be revoked, let it then conduct studies, including a review of Executive Order 546 which authorized the creation of private armed groups like the Civilian Volunteer Organizations. But even before the commission buckles down to work, nothing but lack of resolve prevents the President from ordering the military and the police to get on with the task of dismantling the private armies before they create any more damage.

Publisher Isaac Tambo
Editor-in-Chief/CEO Jose Ma. D. Nolasco
Managing Editor Joaquin C. Gonzalez III
Associate Editor Margarita G. Elagio
Assistant Editor for Production Rosalina R. Santiago
Opinion Editor Juan V. Mercado
News Editor Antonio T. Enriquez Jr. • Chief, Page One Operations Nelly R. Pulgar
Chief, News Desk Cecilia R. Alcantara
Assistant Chief, News Desk Jonathan Jimenez
Senior Desk Editor Jose F. Sonido III
Editor in Consultant Antonio Jimenez
Chief Photographer Raul E. Sunglao III
Art & Design Director Ismael A. Villafuerte
Board of Directors Raissa H. Prieto
President Alexander Poeto-Romualdez
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Ramon R. Roxas
Vice President for Advertising Pilar R. Olaguer
Vice President for Info Tech and Production Gary G. Lim
Vice President for Finance Jose H. Nolasco
Advertising Consultant Manuel Andres R. Chanco IV
AVP for Marketing Josefina S. Reynoso
Corporate Affairs Manager Edwin R. Salazar

All rights reserved. Except as permitted by law, no copies of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or distributed in any form or stored in a retrieval system without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Garbage dump grace

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

(Over the New Year weekend, we drowned through the Asian Development Bank study, "Poverty in the Philippines: Causes, Constraints and Opportunities." But our mind kept drifting to Steinbeck, "on a weekend one story A guy's too rushed didn't tuck his name on. Here is "She was ten" —with excerpts from the ADB study set off by parentheses.)

"POOBELLY HAVE UNEMPLOYMENT" THE DOC-tor said. So, I jogged more. Sundays, 50 bike up Ortigas's Boxer hills. On one of these rounds, I had a "Damascus moment"—something like *Saul* emerging from the brutal heat, struck down by a Presidente outside the Syrian capital.

In a small corner inside us, I was sunk—my second homeless, talking to tortured two kids, picking through the garbage. "Nanonood ba 'Dora' ang mga anak mo?" I scoffed.

"[Over 6.7 million households are locked in to a poverty-hunger treadmill. Hunger has been at double digits for more than four years since June. Poverty incidence there has been much slower than in China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam."]

I've been victimized by pseudo-baranguay. They've made off with bottles, basins, laundry. Or, like TV actors when an addict's mate starts fixing a fight: Clutching, I rose two basement-scorching years with my amnesia.

Remounting my bike, I heard this 7 year-old girl say in the distance: "Nasa, kung I-subong kaya, she's starting at people eating, it's almost six." Only then did I notice a boy of 9 or so, nose by sucking his thumb. He didn't ask for anything. Yet, he was of recently at the food.

["The number of food-poor Filipinos reached 11.2 million or almost 15 percent of the entire population. ... Families, especially the involuntary hunger, at least once in the past three months reached 4.3 million households in the last quarter of 2006."]

The older boy pulled the little one into the dump. "Don't you make one cry," the youngsters' parent said. "They're so well-behaved." A stroke had paralyzed their father. The mother died from a heart attack. The kids scrounged to earn a few pesos for their food and father's medicines.

Monsod, I bought 100 sacots of bread and gave it to the children. But even the little boy declined. "Nervous mind, sir. We'll buy some. If we can sell something from what we've gathered."

[Areas like Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao show people escaping rural poverty. Many end up in slums. The urban population is increasing at double national population growth rate. By 2030, six out of every 10 Filipinos will cluster in urban areas. Many will be short of food, shelter, medical care, credit.]

It turned to drizzle. "Go home," I said. The girl replied, "We're used to this." If they got sick, no one would care for their father. They nodded and accepted the bread. But the older boy didn't eat.

"Don't you like that kind of bread?" I asked.

"It's Sunday, sir," the youngest interrupted. If it's Saturday, we get to eat. On Sunday, we don't eat soon. Only my sisters and I eat breakfast. But in the afternoon, we don't eat. It's only boys who dine."

"Because of chores, only boys has breakfast from Monday to Friday. Like me in this subterranean. If we wait from our garbage picking, then we all starved."

Then before the little girl explained, seasoned irises to enter class with a full stomach, so he could catch up with the lessons. "When boys works, we mean picking garbage. By the way, boys get free lessons."

[About 13 percent of government's annual budget is lost to corruption. For every 10 percent increase in gain in public health services, immunization gains dropped by 16 percent. ... In delivery of public education, money changes hands at nearly every stage of procurement. ... About a third of the population does not complete Grade 6.]

Quickly, I laid my cases. Their attitude was stunning. Yet, there was one thing that they can never change: being motherless. I gave My last P100 bill, reserved for a bonding treatment. They refused.

"If you don't accept, I'll be you," I joked.

"Thank you, sir," The kid said. "We will buy medicine for our father."

["Between 2003 and 2006, our children experienced a general decline in development," the new Child Development Index shows. This child-centered "even though the general of population experienced an improvement," says the National Statistical Coordination Board. "There have been consistent improvements in the health index," says the NSCB. These were not enough to offset the deterioration in education and poverty.]

The little boy's right hand held the half-filled garbage sack while his left hand clasped—what?—a broken duct toy car. I wanted goodbye.

But anonymous would not go away. Did he stumble across the toy in the dump? Was it originally his, before death claimed his mother and a stroke felled his father? I had not asked. Yet, he had not let pool-childhood consistently.

The anonymous would not go away. Did he stumble across the toy in the dump? Was it originally his, before death claimed his mother and a stroke felled his father? I had not asked. Yet, he had not let pool-childhood consistently.

But

Rare occurrences

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE [UNFORTUNATE] EVENTS ARE NEVER EASY, especially for those who belong to huge clans, with the rush to unite as well gifts given the more act of wrapping them can be caught), the seemingly endless parties and reunions, the list goes on. But what was most welcome for many folks was that even public took a rest and the union calmed down from pressing problems. President Macapagal never flew off to Hong Kong for a few days with her grandchildren, and there were no Mideast refugees run off with her family to Angeles for Christmas. Presidential candidates disappeared, with Manny Villar and his family flying to the United States and Grace Poe and family taking a breather in Boracay. (Nervous opinion-wise watchers have been speculating about the holidays.) It was a much-needed break, for here, between the campaign season stalks to high gear until the May elections.

* * *

During the holidays, I read a most interesting report, titled "Post-Disaster Needs Assessment" (PDNA) after "Ondoy" and "Pepeng," a joint initiative of the Philippine government, the private sector and the United Nations, with assistance also in the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and the governments of several countries. More than 1.53 people from both government and the private sector, including the academe, worked on it, and it was released only in 2011. So why the PDNA assessment of the two typhoons' impact on 11 key sectors of the economy, as well as cross-cutting issues relating to local governments, social protection, gender, the environment, disaster risk management and reduction is quite credible. It's not government propaganda.

I will pick up points from the PDNA in future columns, but what impressed me at the outset was the huge value of the damage caused by just an late last September and early October. In accurrence in our dollar programs in the aftermath of the calamities, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral announced that the government had failed to cope by stressing that if those typhoons had occurred every month, maybe it could be hushed. But those kinds of calamities struck once in every 40 years, she noted. To Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, whose city was hit hardest by Ondoy, however, it seemed more like "once in a hundred years," as she told me two weeks ago.

But let's hear it from the experts. The PDNA noted that over 9.2 million people were affected severely out of an estimated 92.2 million people in the affected areas. The scale of the disasters was "unqualified" by their impact on highly populated economic centers" and the private sector bore the brunt of it, mainly the informal sectors (micro, the squatters), who countries saw half of the population of Metro Manila. Even more interesting, said the PDNA, was that the 12-hour rainfall from Ondoy and Pepeng brought floods "estimated to have a return period of around 30 years," meaning that statistically speaking, so much rainfall occurs once in every 30 years. Following Cabral's argument, Marikenyo could die. Besides, the savage natural rainfall in Manila is around 2,000 millimeters. But during the 12-hour period starting 8 a.m. of Sept. 26, 2009, the rainfall recorded at the Manila Observatory was approximately 450 mm, which means "a rainfall event that statistically occurs once every 100 years—an extremely rare occurrence."

* * *

During the holidays, I found time to watch TV and one of the most beautiful sets I saw was on ABS-CBN. It showed a young pianist in coattails vigorously playing on a grand piano atop a pick-up truck, completely oblivious to the traffic as it navigated the city streets. The girl is not familiar, to come to Poland for the 200th anniversary this year of the birth of its most famous composer, Frederic Chopin. I can imagine what a grateful-chested are the Poles will have.

My husband and I were in Poland in November 2000 to attend the 14th Civic Forum Summit, and are asked the best stars in the firm of the Poles: their beloved Pope John Paul II, whose statue can be found everywhere, and Chopin. We arrived in Warsaw's Frederic Chopin International Airport and our hotel was the Sheraton Frederic Chopin, where the heart of the composer, is downstairs in the lobby. There are endless recital venues, featuring Chopin's music in varying prices, including those that call for long gowns and tuxedos. In Poznan, where the summit summit was held, delegates were treated to a tour of a beautiful wooded estate highlighted by a Chopin concert by the protégée of a distinguished Polish lady artist, with the music of Chopin as background. All the adulation of the Poles before the fact that Chopin, who is acknowledged as "pre-eminent composer and pianist in the history of the piano," left his native country at the age of 21 for Paris, where he became the darling of the high society there. He never returned to Poland, dying in Paris at age 39 of tuberculosis, after a 10-year affair with French author who wrote under the pen name George Sand.

* * *

Filipino music lovers adore the music of Chopin because the lyrical quality of his preludes, nocturnes, mazurkas and waltzes complement their emotional nature. Some of his pieces are sexual and erotic favorites. Perhaps the best-known interpret of Chopin here is internationally renowned concert pianist Cecile Licad, who made an unforgettable impression at the 11th College of Music. A master of music graduate of the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, Licad's earliest fantasy (at age 21 was his nocturne, London Whimsical Chin. So his gentleman in the concert years of the world during his 40 year career. I began to take his piano exposition seriously when I heard him play Chopin's ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 at the home of Former Cagayan Ambassador Herbert Aca. It's a tribute to him that he was invited in 2005 to be a member of the jury in Emily Langrie that presidential candidates for the Chopin competition held in Warsaw every four years.

My husband and I were in Poland in November 2000 to attend the 14th Civic Forum Summit, and are asked the best stars in the firm of the Poles: their beloved Pope John Paul II, whose statue can be found everywhere, and Chopin. We arrived in Warsaw's Frederic Chopin International Airport and our hotel was the Sheraton Frederic Chopin, where the heart of the composer, is downstairs in the lobby. There are endless recital venues, featuring Chopin's music in varying prices, including those that call for long gowns and tuxedos. In Poznan, where the summit summit was held, delegates were treated to a tour of a beautiful wooded estate highlighted by a Chopin concert by the protégée of a distinguished Polish lady artist, with the music of Chopin as background. All the adulation of the Poles before the fact that Chopin, who is acknowledged as "pre-eminent composer and pianist in the history of the piano," left his native country at the age of 21 for Paris, where he became the darling of the high society there. He never returned to Poland, dying in Paris at age 39 of tuberculosis, after a 10-year affair with French author who wrote under the pen name George Sand.

* * *

Filipino music lovers adore the music of Chopin because the lyrical quality of his preludes, nocturnes, mazurkas and waltzes complement their emotional nature. Some of his pieces are sexual and erotic favorites. Perhaps the best-known interpret of Chopin here is internationally renowned concert pianist Cecile Licad, who made an unforgettable impression at the 11th College of Music. A master of music graduate of the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, Licad's earliest fantasy (at age 21 was his nocturne, London Whimsical Chin. So his gentleman in the concert years of the world during his 40 year career. I began to take his piano exposition seriously when I heard him play Chopin's ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 at the home of Former Cagayan Ambassador Herbert Aca. It's a tribute to him that he was invited in 2005 to be a member of the jury in Emily Langrie that presidential candidates for the Chopin competition held in Warsaw every four years.

Resolutions

LIGHT FROM THE BLUE MOON SHONE THROUGH MY window as firecrackers set off by neighbors, who woke up late for the midnight countdown, occasionally broke the silence of the new hours. Instead of counting sheep, I attempted to sleep early this morning by counting up with my resolutions for the new year.

It occurred to me then that I come up more or less with the same ones that I do every year, ranging from small changes like "Resting my teeth more often to more drastic ones like vowing to be less talkative. In between, of course, are New Year's resolutions maybe like losing weight or cheating just before all my

YOUNG BLOOD

Kim Arreven Patria

Job-seeker or know-how? What are those thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

pants rip, holding tested oils, saving for a trip, doing homework at home instead of cramming 30 minutes before class and consuming less sugar.

Another realization is that a month or even a week after coming up with my New Year's resolutions, I end up losing resolve and/or lies throughout the year unchanged: still insomniac about my phone, still drowning about what documents, still getting late instead of weekend grades and still at risk of diabetes.

I took the night this noon, which coincided with the changing of the year, as a sign that this year would be different. I realized that perhaps I was not the only one floating in reverie and that there were countless others who could be tucked in their beds for their first good night's sleep this year yet who were too excited about the start of the 365 days ahead to heed the sandman's call. If not, there were others who followed a song's advice and counted their year's blessings.

I wondered though if there were Filipinos who thought about the Philippines this New Year. While my sisters posted countless "Happy 2019!" at a full dinner table last night, as a first time voter, I nodded and, with much trepidation, announced: "I will finally vote."

Since unusually and scandal bounded the present administration, many have started inking days till the calendar said that they have 2019 when they could vote this Macapagal-Arroyo-Estrada-Duterte-Aquino-Estrada-Arroyo-Macapagal-Arroyo-Estrada dynasty from the Palace office to be replaced by someone hopefully better. I remember being near the Batasan Complex when President Arroyo delivered her State of the Union Address. The main topic screaming to audience, mirrors, pre-cheering at the fact that it would be her last even as she pointed out the timeline she needed.

I could only help to wonder if Filipinos who anxiously count the President's numbered days are thinking hard about whom to replace her with.

When strongman Ferdinand Marcos' regime was on the verge of collapse, Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. appointed pity for the next president of the country. There's the same feeling for the next president, who will take on the burden of rebuilding this country that has stumbled into ashes and dust.

Having said that, I offer New Year's resolutions to the person vying to be the next president of this country.

First, regain people's trust. Doubt has been the basis of the incumbent administration—doubt in the track of transparency in public affairs and doubt in the capacity of institutions to keep information from the people. While we call ourselves a democracy, let us realize that national officials merely win by plurality of votes, and not by a majority. Trust in government, which I take to be the true definition of legitimacy must therefore always be reinforced.

Second, drop pride instead. Just on Facebook, do not summon if our country deliver Filipinos are tired of traditional politics that dishes out broken promises and lies. It's high time you gave their hopes they can hold on to and not hopes that fail. Your campaigns found dizzying orange illusion of a poverty-free Philippines or yellow magnificent of a saintly government. Now, it's time to show us that you are serious in staying away from issues or by giving lessons the kind they almost sensed? You will as that you do not engage in tradition of politics, but are you not doing exactly that by talking in air?

Of course, you must learn to sit go. That goes for the incumbent President too. We have not recovered from the trauma caused by a President's prolonged stay in power as the shadow of the Marcos dictatorship still looms over our consciousness. It does not help that, to allay our fears, we can cite the constitutional provision limiting a president's term and barring reelection. You have six years to prove your worth as a leader, so why not do it in three? Or four? Once you find that you have not left a legacy good enough for you to be remembered by, do not further tarnish your already-lost reputation by clinging to power. If you intend to serve this country perhaps stepping down when it is time is the better service you can offer. Perhaps there is a need to embrace the confidence for your election: six years, without any chance of redemption.

For the voting population, I ask that you resolve to think and think again before writing names on your ballots. For too long have we voted based on surnames instead of track records, thereby turning our government into a playground for the rich and powerful who have the money to buy votes. We also treat platforms as nonexistent, and since candidates are never without vested interests, check if the good they can contribute to this country will outweigh whatever gains they will obtain by serving term as president.

We worry about giving second chances. Remember the song, "Give me one yes if you feel no one, shame on me if you find me twice."

Also beware of candidates with messiah complex who come close to saying that they will pay off all this country's debts or miraculously purify the hearts of all bureaucrats, from barangay hens before them to before nations who promised to give aid in this month.

The new 2018 holds promise, but let us not keep our hopes up. In the same manner that we usually end the year realizing that the only step we have taken toward achieving our New Year's resolutions is making them, 2018 might just end with us staring at the moon yet again, while remaining hopelessly hopeful.

Kim Arreven Patria, 25, is a journalism student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

The curse of singing journalists, *atbp.*

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD. RUNS ONE typical comment to one of the many available YouTube versions. Watching ABS-CBN's "Sho ang Simula" music video, we can easily see why. It is catchy, powerful, unforgettable. It is also wrong.

It's there, in the name of the campaign, the old trade laundry standard line between journalism and entertainment.

I have many friends in the ABS-CBN news room, and in the one in Mindanao, the late Dante Ang, Cherie Villa and Glenda Gloria ... I both know and admire. I am also quite aware that, under Maria's management, the ABS-CBN newsroom has fought a difficult but largely successful battle to preserve its hard-earned professional and ethical heritage of the Kapatas years. I have also noticed, in the space and deadlines, about seeing this sense of professionalism at work in ABS-CBN and its radio shows—Ang DZMM Teleradyo and Cherie Gil's Radio Mindanao. ABS-CBN News Channel. (I have enjoyed the opportunity to chat, by appointable, on an occasion or two, on-camera on ANC.)

One more thing: I know the rhetoric before the fact and like both the premise and the conduct of the Boto Mo Pinoy PH campaign (the manager be the "Boto Mo Pinoy" hashtag, the "Sho ang Simula" invitation to voters, to the "Sho ang Simula" I am the beginning, so it begins with me) music video.

It is for those reasons that I found their singing setting participation in the video deeply upsetting.

Watching the video on the day it was released weeks ago, I had a vague sense of unease. I was swept away by the visual narrative, but something held me back. It took several random viewings before I could put my finger on it. Then it hit me. The video is about the ABS-CBN family's decision to join Manny and other news journalists, who all can be seen and heard singing, and the professional singers, like the inimitable Bayang Barrios, who punctuate the video. Perhaps that was, in fact, the point of it all, but the setting makes it deeply wrong, because it sends the message that journalism is a mere subset of entertainment.

Let me be more specific. I realized, even later, that I was distracted by the images of my friends and colleagues taking part in the video as singers or actors—and even more upset that their participation was entirely unnecessary. Should the music video have resulted without Cherie Gloria or Ces Drilon singing, and without Ang, with our Pia Hontiveros leading a bevy of other journalists, without Maria and Glenda singing and staring directly into the camera? I think so.

Obviously, the decision was made, perhaps by the director (Paolo Villaluna) or the executive producer (my colleague-in-another Pen Dizon-Salazar), to include the journalists in the song and dance too. (I'm not sure if I want to know what the reasoning process was like.)

But the ABS-CBN newsroom has already come under fire for the celebrity news shows it airs every night and on weekends. Those shows deal largely in buzz or manufactured news; most don't qualify for the kind of vision of an emerging democracy that the news room has come to represent, even if some of its programs have been legitimate news programs.

There's the rub. The "Sho ang Simula" music video is a product of this same valuefulness of values. It isn't about the news anymore. But the news media celebrities they are, it insists, even news executives as though they were nonentities too. Indeed, and here he no less indispensable proof, over the Christmas holidays the music video was replaced by a video of the network's broadcast celebrities driving a big, 20-car advertisement for the 2019 elections.

"Sho ang Simula," it seems to me, is a dead end for Philippine journalism.

Newsroom thoughts at the start of a new year. Bradley Dinsmore succeeded Henry Luce as Time editor in chief, and it was under his management that Time reached the peak of its powers and influence. In 1969, he wrote a characteristically self-effacing memoir, the first chapter of which listed a handful of "working rules" in "managing the entertainment side" of Time Inc. "Serious journalism," Tory hewed, by definition, he could have stated "entertainment" and the effect would have been the same) who established the Time group's most important assets. Two excerpts:

"Executive newsbreaks is a high calling. The individual who undertakes this job is seeking to organize/improve/protect an environment in which creative people can do something done. It is their best work. Creative people may not always be 'nice' people. Creative people don't always behave in the expected, normal ways. But they should be. All the many ways that employees can be mysterious, resentful, or critical of the boss are accentuated when the employees are individuals. They can be temperamental, rude, stubborn, etc. But it is still true that one of the greatest possible executive satisfactions is to feel you have helped bring out or bring along an intellectual talent. Sensitively managed, even large and complex organizations can stimulate and liberate creative individuals.

"Don't be stingy with criticism. It goes without saying that the manager must be generous with praise, but the judicious application of criticism to very senior people is more challenging and more rare. Criticism is valuable that must be implicit in successful criticism of individuals. First, you can do better work than this, in fact, some of this is very good. I just wish more of it were as good as the best of it. Second, the standard of excellence is being applied to your peers. And last, I myself want to be left, by you and others, to these standards."

Jnery@inquirer.com.ph | johnnery.wordpress.com

Notice to Youngblood contributors:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Honoring 'unsung heroes'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JUST IN TIME FOR THE OPENING OF A brighter, more optimistic new year comes an award of honor in Salcedo Street, the University of Santo Tomas Educational Association recently honored the contributions of the men and women of the Philippine Army in simple but touching yet emotion.

During the season of joy sharing and thanksgiving, we at 11-918 Mom and Filipino soldiers to be the heroes we can't be," Inside Inside, the school's then Education director, said in her welcoming speech. "We have no idea of the pains your sacrifices for us. But rest assured that we pray for peace, freedom and security come at a great price."

Indeed, not only do soldiers and other peacekeepers sometimes the highest price—their own lives—in doing their duty, but they also have to leave behind, in other, more intangible ways, such as time away from their families and loved ones, constant threat, and post-traumatic stress, due to regular and prolonged exposure to death and danger.

The recognition and honor given to the unsung, but dedicated soldiers was also to strengthen character and enhance patriotism. And for this, the initiative of the military's role in the awareness of young people, including the role soldiers play in disaster-prepared ness, rescue and rehabilitation.

* * *

HIGHLIGHT OF the occasion was the reading of selected letters written by the elementary and high school students of 11-918's to the soldiers.

"Ayaw sa kubot ng mga sundalo," Nikka Yap, 7, wrote, "salamat sa inyong pagtatanggol sa aming bansa laban sa mga terorista." Nancy pathetic sweet-heart-ng Bicol para sa kanilang pangangalaga ang inyong mga buhay araw-araw." (To all the soldiers, Thank you for your bravery and honest service to your country. Many lives and homes are so precious continue to carry out your duties.)

* * *

FOR the soldiers' part, three privates shared their experiences in the military. One of them is an alumna of the university's College of Nursing, and her private whose husband is also an Army soldier told her sons were about how she met her better half (sitting together only during short periods, the two have shared many years of living and sing, "and we're still holding on to them," she added.

Despite the fact that we spend so little time with each other and that each day we're apart feels like a lifetime, being both in the Army makes us more grateful that he is in my life and I am in his," she added. "Our experiences bond us together in a special kind of way."

The generals, in turn, pledged to donate their brand new computers to the school. They also announced that a new congressional bill in the favors of the students will be presented to be distributed to Filipino soldiers nationwide.

* * *

IT'S certainly heartwarming to know that the students, faculty and administrators of a university named enough about the mantle of our men and women in uniform to create an occasion to show the nation's gratitude and appreciation for all their sacrifices and hardship in behalf of the nation.

This is all just part of the core-ed philosophy that underlies the decision of the Philippine Independent by Oscar A. Ilarde, its rector in the field of education, and its president, Fr. Ed Picardal, CM, UST and president of Phinma, put it: "Skills are important, but we know that, given the pace of change in society, skills have to be constantly honed and some technical skills will become obsolete. Depend on your quality and effectiveness are your core as at salient; your solidarity with the common good, your adherence to truth, your love for justice and your commitment to self-realization."

Phinma is presently the owner of the University of Pangasinan (Dagupan), Araullo University (Cabanatuan), University of Iloilo, and La-guna de Dos College.

All four institutions are managed following Phinma's core principles in entering the educational field: charging the lowest tuition and fees from P12,000 to 15,000), and offering courses oriented courses while maintaining high-quality standards.

And as Ed Picardal declared, and as shown by the students of 11-918, they emphasize not just skills-sharing and knowledge-building, but the creation and reinforcement of values, including appreciation for "unsung heroes" hungry for a little recognition.

© 2019 INQUIRER.net

Surveys and manipulation

Popularity is fraught with shame. It is like a magnifying glass through which a man may seem bigger than he is. Most wisdom gleaned from it is — J.D. Salinger.

EVEN DE LA CRUZ MAY BE APT TO "VOTE" for a bad president (given the 2004 elections). And, if you doubt doesn't the instantly contest (the effusion of "surveys") and political administration, then there's the rub.

The crowd continues to ride on the herd, mindlessly, on the opening crooks and going story, by way of media projections, are well on the rising to make a earlier out of the 9:30 prior election rules are merely gullible and naive.

How despicable! to realize the "figure" on the body plane of the poor and downcast who naturally comprise the great majority of our population, we are simply amused and beauty allow "surveys" and "advertisements" to wobble and manipulate our will the psyche and soul of the voters that the "prelude" events leading to judgment day...thus thwarting the genuine will of the people.

As the date approaches for June to mean to the practical heeds, it will be schooled consent, not only among political aspirants, but among competing "scientific" or "professional" survey groups. All probably announcing discovering results every time, each boasting toward a concrete candidate, depending on whatever would "commission" the release for publication of the outcome. And "schooled" by men he could very well have the ugly wicked nerve to justify massive cheating, again.

Political surveys must be for private consumption and the results should never be publicly announced, much less made from page headlines. If—built the whole thing up, better still, hide them all until May 20 10.

This vote-casting responsibility call a constitutional right has corroded into a mere popularity contest, and it is unfair to the core, else, even an ex-convict is encouraged to run and campaign in among the like because of "surveys."

A disgrace.

—MIGUEL FALMAGNA
cruzmiguel@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Uttered by a babe

THE WORDS ASCRIBED TO ONE OF PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo grandchildren wishing that "him will be president forever" reveals the same unrealistic, obfuscatory and feed more of the process infrastructure of Malacañang whose dubious measures are alone as real. The channel through which such wishful prints on the front pages of many newspapers was obviously arranged by DMA's press stooper who probably thought it was cute/acceptable "cute," uttered—apparently so or was by a babe!

Given the unstoppable fact that GMA has no need not to be the "most unpopular," if not the most abominable, chief executive this country has ever had, such self-statements of GMA by her "proles-crypt" make us all want to puke! Pity the innocent child who got used and abused in the process.

—STEVEN V. VITPHIL, Esq.
myvoice88@yahoo.com

Columnist wrong on Randy's choice

SORSOGON/ALBAY/CATANDUANES/DAVAO ORIENTAL — Ace in above who serves me as a leader don't go to. Decisions. [illegible] Undecided could accuse him Goliath. David decided to choose his arms in closing the measure of Philippine politics.

As one who has met as a leader, I completely understand and support Randy's decision to refrain the menu of hands. As many who have understood the essence of our politics, Randy's own the need for a whole system change if we are to survive as a nation.

It is not like Randy to be a person in romantic short agenda. Randy believes that when a reckoning and awakening the request is ripe for policy. One knows that when the patronage sleeps and food entertainment, mostly for audiences and minds with corrupt food and, or of black was organization.

Being a true statesman, Randy is a man's heart cannot to challenge the whole rotten system. Aspiration, my friend political system that is the mother of all vote local politics. He has written many times to the effect on the opposing principle of leadership is an organizing principle for national renewal. He seeks to work with others committed to change and true means to concrete policy initiatives.

I understand Randy's motivation going around the country giving talks in just when it takes to start the nation's life. He participates in the campaign by joining you whom he knows of Philippine governance like the one in Rizal. Subsidiarity this anarchy.

Subsidiarity blossomed explicitly. Friendship me one with Randy in pushing the struggle for systemic change through constituency building in support of the time-honored done and food candidates, but wars. Let's not waste time in influencing the outcome or games so they see limitless our Commission.

Randy David would have been caught up in the dynamics of local politics as a young boy [illegible] 1964. And to cause laugh as GMA's ability to wrong love for power. Randy chose, as we stand tall.

—FR. JP CAMBA,
co-convenor, Subsidiarity
Movement International

Investigate HMOs, rationalize HMO services

THROUGH THIS LETTER, I WISH TO CALL the attention of our legislature to the need to enact a law that would rationalize the health care programs being offered by several health maintenance organizations (HMOs) in our country.

I am a senior citizen whose membership in an HMO was unilaterally and unjustly terminated by the company right after my going through an ailment (see "preventing illnesses" medication period).

I am prepared and would be pleased to share this experience with the concerned legislative committee(s) that may be tasked to craft the bill. It should provide some valuable inputs.

—EDUARDO S. MIGUEL JR.
toddy.miguel@yahoo.com

Air Philippines

Low fares na may Libre pa!

* Selling and travel period: All year round
Fares as low as:

15 kgs. FREE baggage allowance*

Php 788 — Manila to Virac or Naga, or v.v.

Php 888 — Manila to Busuanga, San Jose (Mindoro) or Tuguegarao, or v.v.
Cebu to Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro, Bollo or Tacloban, or v.v.

Php 1188 — Manila to Boracay (Caticlan)*, Calbayog or Catarman, or v.v.
Cebu to Boracay (Caticlan)* or Zamboanga, or v.v.

Php 1288 — Cebu to Dipolog or Ozamiz, or v.v.
Davao to Zamboanga or v.v.

Php 1688 — Manila to Ormoc or v.v.

Php 2488 — Manila to Surigao or v.v.

Quoted fares are one-way, inclusive of government fees and taxes.
Book and buy.
Promo fare is non-refundable
Limited seats only.
Cash payment terms and conditions for carriage apply.
Fares available online.
* 10 kgs. free baggage allowance on Manila to Boracay or v.v. and Cebu to Boracay or v.v. routes

For more information, visit us at www.airphils.com

Operated by: Air Philippines
Codeshared with: Philippine Airlines
palexpressair.com

The secret

LAST YEAR, MY WIFE AND I CELEBRATED OUR 40TH WEDDING anniversary. The manager Lolanes, as we call our family of 11 children (our namesake) and their spouses, our 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, totaling 34 members of our loop organized on July 11, 2008, hosted the celebration.

I was a restless young Bicolano eager to make up for lost time when I went to Manila just after the war to look for work and study. After I found a job in Sorsogon (My first love Cathedral), I spent the little money I had to enroll in night classes at the Far Eastern University. There I met the love of my life (although at first I was only interested in her piano playing and the way I talked so low and mellow-toned). She decided to marry her, not only the color of a lovely bride's dress (I was so timid I could not think one wedding motto, "Love me sing."

But fortune is a [illegible] children. They were born faster than I could graduate and become a CPA. When I jokingly examined my wife about my wedding night vows, she said "I thought you said 'Labog on lang.'"

With 11 children to feed, educate and raise according to our faith, my wife and I worked ourselves at the home and had to be on our knees or on our feet most of the time, praying and working hard to earn more money.

To augment my income, I taught Accounting in a college each morning and after office work, while my wife also worked to augment the family income. Was in 1966, I had to transfer my center for and to Cebu where I opened the first Bookkeeping branch in the Visayas-Mindanao area. There, my wife resumed her piano teaching with renewed hands. My wife was initially successful. In 1982, she was chosen by the Ministry of Trade and Industry as the first Golden Shell awardee in garment manufacturing. Just after she received the 20 brooches in the Malacañang Palace, I [illegible] to 9 years' assignment in Cebu, I was recalled to Manila to head the bank's management/banking business. My higher transfer was the key to Manila, luck, work and favor. After a few years of operation in Manila, business circumstances beyond our control led to serious money problems. They [illegible] more than 1 million pesos. But by the grace of God and my excellent boss [illegible] to pay the problems behind us.

We accepted our loss gratefully. My wife and I poured food to God and to our kin, the Virgin of Peñafrancia, by guidance. We held each other's hands, all the more to strengthen and console each other. Through it all, our prayer never was, "Bring me back to my comfortable life." Frankly, it never occurred to us.

So, we had some new quarrels. Like when the world financial. It knocked on the bathroom door like she was going to have another baby. Before I could finish reading the front page of the business, or use my toothbrush again for minutes.

When I look back to when my wife and I were through, I realize that what kept us strong in the face of all our problems was our deep love for each other, for our 11 children, and our deep faith and trust in God and his Son, the Virgin of Peñafrancia.

Thus, at hindsight, it also seems of no long marriage. So, our advice to married couples, for their marriage to last long is: Love an unconditional faith in God, be devoted to God, love your family and do what is right in God and in our sight. Love and cherish each other. Be virtuous and obedient.

When there are many like us here, spouses have many reasons to work it out together, pray together and have no time to fight each other.

Which brings me back to our diamond wedding anniversary.

It was a joy of no complimentary cuckoo we made it to celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary and we still look like we were only 60 years old, without plastic surgery or any surgical gizmos. Our parents were referring to my wife, Ching, of course, when she is really about 5 and she was one of her classmates, and I, the 10 grandchildren and the last salesperson are. She does look 60 and when asked about her age, she does not lie about it. She just says she is four years younger than me, which is true, and then lies about my age.

Me? Everything that could happen to me 60 years old must happened to me. Except for my now salt-and-pepper hair, I can't read without my bifocals, I can't eat without my dentures, I can't always remember names or places in the house where I had things, I can't maneuver without prime time, I can't put on or off my pants and shoes without help.

But the most devastating thing that happened to me was the loss of my hearing in both ears, almost totally. Asked if I could receive my hearing the closest said no, she says is dead, and when my grandson's mouth closes, it becomes deaths. Also, the dreaded "double dose" never ascribed to my thoughts I heard him say.

So, my daughter bought me a pair of hearing aids. He found out what I liked, costing P120,000 (gasp). Recovering, a chagrinned me for this search. He thought me, first. Two was over my strength I cried time. Because I am stingy, we thought to other one. Unfortunately, I soon forgot where I placed me.

Now that I'm retired, and am out and tired of doing nothing at my 60 years of hard work in the banking industry, I decided to devote my time to observing, thinking and writing down what is happening around me, especially in my country. I recently became a member of Philippine Association of Armed Persons. Good thing my children gave me a Laptop. With it, I can now finger-type during the day and sometimes long into the night about whatever comes to my mind.

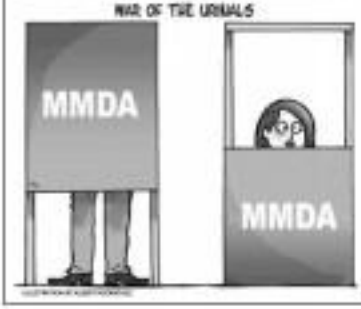
Back to the secret of our long marriage. Having plenty of faith, they believe politicians and economists, but coupled with unfailing faith in God and in the love and protection of the Virgin of Peñafrancia, it preserved our marriage beyond etc. it prolonged our love and sacred life, and we're still counting.

Amado F. Gaborro is a founding chair and past national president of the Philippine Association of Armed Persons.

HIGH BLOOD

Amado F. Gaborro

Dick, Bayani bicker over design of women's urinals



From page B1

comment on the plan of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to put up urinals for women, presidential candidate and Sen. Richard Gordon said the project was feasible and cited an example from Olongapo City of which he was mayor for two separate terms.

But his vice presidential candidate, former MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, was hastily embarrassed, and said that finding a suitable design for such a project would be a challenge.

Quipped Gordon: "We are friends, but we also disagree."

To think that when the two men filed their certificates of candidacy last month at the Commission on Elections, Fernando said he had hoped "the person who shares my beliefs," and that they "complement each other."

The MMDA, under its new chair Oscar Inocencio, had earlier announced it was planning to put up women's urinals on Edsa—an apparent takeoff on the construction of men's urinals on a number of streets during Fernando's term as MMDA chair.

Difficult to maintain

But when asked for a reaction yesterday, Fernando said he rejected the idea even during his term because he noticed, if it would be difficult to maintain urinals for women.

Unlike urinals for men, those for women need more water. Fernando pointed out, and once the cubicles are covered, "people will do anything there," he said.

He added that he saw urinals for women in Sweden but that when he inspected the cubicles, he found these littered with all sorts of human waste.

"What is needed for women are standard toilets, but these have to be maintained. I wish (the MMDA) luck in finding a suitable design," Fernando said.

'Space toilets'

But Gordon had his own idea.

Taking the floor immediately after Fernando spoke on the matter, he said "space toilets" similar to those in Japan would be ideal.

He said his administration had put up toilets for women in Olongapo that were managed by those overseeing the public markets.

Gordon said one of the toilets was for a fee, which also resulted in revenues for the group in charge of the public markets.

Fernando, however, was not impressed. He expressed doubt that 50-peso women would pay to use toilets built on the streets.

Taiwan tower now aims to be world's highest green structure

TAIPEI—(AUTHOR) IS A TURN of extending over 900 meters in Dubai, the world's former tallest building, Taipei 101, wants to become the highest green structure by completing a shedding of clean energy standards, a spokesperson said on Monday.

Taipei 101 will spend $1.9 billion over the next year to meet 100 criteria for an environmental certificate that it would hold over Dubai, spokesperson Michael Lin said.

The office-commercial tower that reigned for five years as the world's highest building at 509 meters regains the US-based Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design to give it the certificate in 2011.

"We're limited now on becoming a Taiwan landmark, that won't change, and on going green. We'd be the tallest building to get a green certificate," Lin said by telephone.

Taipei 101, he said, would work with its 40 office tenants to cut electricity and water use, while encouraging them to recycle more refuse. Annual utility savings should total T$22 million.

Restaurants would be asked to bring in supplies from as close as possible to reduce transportation.

Green towers are unusual in Asia, a region with the world's busiest construction sector yet one of the poorest records for eco-friendly building. Reuters

Height of world's ...

From page A1

the Burj had it edging out the world's previous record-holder, the Taipei 101, by about 18 metres. The Taiwan tower rises 508 metres.

The Burj's developer, Emaar Properties, kept quoting the design higher even after someone touched again, eventually paring it about 300 meters taller than its nearest competitor. Dubai is said its is keeping quiet about the exact height.

Dubai's ruler will open the tapering metal-and-glass spire with a fireworks display Wednesday evening.

Security is expected to be tight. Local newspapers quoted Maj. Gen. Mohammed Eid al-Matrooshi, head of the prosecutor security and emergency unit for Dubai Police, saying more than 3,000 security personnel, including plainclothes police and sharpshooters, will be deployed to secure the area for the opening.

Started in 2004

Plans for the Burj Dubai began in 2004 and continued rapidly in times, new floors were being added almost every three days, offending Dubai's clarion push to reshape itself over a few years from a small time desert outpost into a cosmopolitan urban giant packed with skyscrapers.

By January 2007, thousands of laborers, many of them brought in on temporary contracts from India, had completed 160 stories.

The finished product contains more than 160 floors. That is over 10 stories more than Chicago's Willis Tower, the tallest record-holder in the US formerly known as the Sears Tower.

At their peak, some apartments in the Burj were selling for more than $1,000 per square foot, though they now run go for less than half that, said Heather Wigginton Smith, chief executive of Dubai real estate consultancy Investment Boutique.

Armani hotel

Besides luxury apartments and offices, the Burj will be home to a hotel designed by Giorgio Armani.

It's also the centerpiece of a $60-acre development that officials hope will become a new central residential and commercial district in the sprawling southern desiccated city. It is flanked by dozens of smaller but brand new skyscrapers and the Middle East's largest shopping mall.

That layout—at the foot of a lower rise dealing—lets the Burj stand out prominently against the horizon. It is visible across dozens of miles of rolling sand dunes outside Dubai. From there, the spire appears as an almost solitary slender needle reaching high into the sky.

Tough times

The Burj's opening comes at a tough time for Dubai's economy. Property prices in newer parts of the sheikdom have collapsed by nearly half over the past year.

The city-state turned to its oil-rich neighbor Abu Dhabi for a series of bailouts totaling $25 billion in 2009 to help cover debts amassed by a network of state-linked companies. Many developer Emaar is still partly owned by the government, but is not among the companies known to have received emergency cash.

Emaar has said the entire Downtown Burj Dubai development, which includes the tower, will cost $20 billion to build. Sales of properties around the Burj are meant to help pay for the tower itself, which analysts say is unlikely to be profitable on its own.

Jim Clarke, research and communications manager for the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, which tracks world's tallest claims, said the building's real value might be that it is the "biggest ever marketing campaign" Dubai would have come up with.

"Put your name and that of the Burj Dubai on an envelope, and no postal service in the world will have problems delivering the mail," he said. AP

HIGHRISE. The company behind twice Taipei 101 shrugged off the loss to Burj Dubai of its title as the world's tallest skyscraper and focused on its bid to be the first tallest building to get a green certificate. AFP

PNP admits failure to dismantle private armies, backs 'third-party'

From page A1

to help the police and the military in reviewing their programs to understand why they have failed to dismantle the private armed groups, he said.

"We have had a number of programs against private armies before like 'Oplan Paglalansag.' It's important to see why those programs failed and see how we can improve them," he told reporters.

Sociocultural aspects

Ateneza stressed that the commission, which the President created on Dec. 4 in the aftermath of the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao allegedly by a local warlord family, has to consider what he called the sociocultural aspects of the problem.

"The solution to this problem is not just a police or military matter. There's a sociocultural dimension to it," he said.

"The independent commission should look into the root causes of the formation of private armies," said Ateneza.

A separate police investigation, the PNP chief noted, have also been initiated violence was rampant in areas ruled by political dynasties.

"Political dynasties use their private armies to perpetuate themselves in power by threat and intimidation," he said.

Private armies also usually proliferate in poverty-stricken regions, he said, suggesting that economic backwardness was a factor in the peace and order and security of certain areas.

"In those areas, the dependence of people on political personalities is very high so they tend to support their area of private armies," he said.

He also noted the importance of the cooperation and awareness of the local community in the campaign to stamp out private armies.

"The people should not vote for politicians with known private armed groups," he said.

Some successes

The PNP chief noted that the police has had some successes in controlling the operations of some state-armed groups in the provinces.

In Abra, he said the police was able to dismantle a number of private armies after the arrest of former governor Vicente Valera, accused of masterminding the killing of a judicial official, the late congressman Luis Bersamin.

The effective implementation of the firearms control program has also helped in limiting the arms supply of hired goons, he said.

A body like no other

Gary Olivar, the deputy presidential spokesperson, said Malacañang expects the commission to present "cases and not just accusations" like the Maguindanao massacre from being espoused.

He noted that unlike in the past, the commission will have a "specific mandate ... to focus all available resources of government, including resources of security forces on this particular problem."

Olivar said that the work of the commission deserved the full support of the public.

"This is an undertaking not just by the administration or by the commission. It is an undertaking by all of us who were affected by what happened last year in Maguindanao and with no gun on mind in this type of incident once and for all," he said reporters.

Findings recommendatory

Ms Arroyo has given the commission four months to do its work of helping to dismantle private armies, meaning she expects it to complete the job before the May 2010 elections.

But, as Olivar himself has admitted, the body's findings will only be recommendatory.

The implementation will be left to the proper line agencies of government, headed by the President.

But the ability to force to measure said to enlist public support for what needs to be done are what will make the difference, he said.

Olivar said the complex problem may not necessarily be solved under the present administration.

"The actual implementation, obviously, since the President has started the ball rolling on her watch, may carry over to the next administration," he said.

"But the important thing is to get the recommendations in place, get the proper ministries started and then let it be picked up and continued by whoever will replace the President in office," he said.

Not yet on board

The Catholic bishop named to the Maguindanao oversight body on dismantling private armies said he has not yet accepted the appointment.

Bernan Bishop Jose de Dios Pueblos said he will first have to clear his appointment with the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Edmund Joseph Adams, the Vatican envoy in the Philippines.

Should he accept, it will be the second time that Pueblos has been named to a government-created panel. He was also a member of the 2006 Melo Commission that investigated extra-judicial killings and human rights abuses.

Aside from Pueblos, the other members of the commission are Mohmod Mala Ado of the Bishops Ulama Conference, Herman Basbano of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Roy Rosell Loyzaga of Philippine Retired Generals Association of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers, retired police general Virtus Gil and Dante Jimenez of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption. With Cleo Calimbahin, Evangeline Jose, Dona Pazzibugan

Editor Teddyboy S. Molondres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoste
SPORTS

Peping shoots down peace dialogue with Angping

By Jose Navarro

THE LONG-AWAITED PEACE AND reconciliation between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission are not on the horizon.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. has spurned the invitation for a dialogue with PSC chair Harry Angping to end their feud over what's good for Philippine sports.

"What are we going to talk about? We haven't done anything wrong," said Cojuangco Sunday in reaction to the proposed talks broadcast by the Philippine Sportswriters Association.

"At this point, I don't think there's a need for a dialogue. Just follow the law. Don't all we're asking for."

Cojuangco emphasized that the role of the POC is to subsidize the needs of the national sports associations and to assist with the POC on the formation of the national team.

"If they do the things the POC is mandated to do, I don't think there will be any problem," he said.

Cojuangco noted that the Olympic body and the government sports agency met for the last time in September when Olympic Committee representative to the country Frank Elizalde and Health secretary Francisco Duque acting as ministers on separate occasions.

"Nothing happened in those meetings," said Cojuangco.

Because the POC insisted on a four-point course, Team Philippines for the recent Southeast Asian Games and the POC unfield's young national team prospects to the delegation, the athletes went to Laos to two separate chartered flights, highlighting the disunity.

But the athletes, perhaps spurred on by the promise of lucrative PSC reward for victories, managed to venture 38 golds to finish fifth overall, a step up over the country's record over Manila in 2005.

Angping, however, was amenable to a reconciliation to end the conflict that was triggered by the POC election in 2008, when he campaigned for shooting's Art Mangaoang in a bid to topple Cojuangco.

"I'm amenable to anything that will resolve all of these complications," said Angping. "We have to move on."

"I'm willing to sit down," he added. "But I'm sure if I sit down with him [Cojuangco] and we agree on some matters, I will be trapped in the middle if he becomes too demanding."

"As far as I know what I'm doing is good for the athletes."

According to POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta, the POC and the PSC had their respective chairmen officers to represent on their behalf before former PSC chair Ronde Fuentes stepped down last year.

"It was a good setup," said Romasanta. "But when he [Angping] took over, the plan was shelved."

COJUANGCO

'What are we going to talk about? We haven't done anything wrong'

Key talks to save megafight tomorrow

By Ray Luarca

A MAKE-OR-BREAK MEETING BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES of Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. is scheduled for Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) as try to save the planned March 13 showdown of the two superstar fighters at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Retired federal judge Daniel Weinstein will serve as mediator in the meeting set at his house in Mission office of the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services in Los Angeles, according to a report by Lem Satterfield of boxing.fanhouse.com.

Top Rank boss Bob Arum, CEO of Top Rank Promotions, and Top Rank president Todd duBoef, while Team Mayweather will be represented by Leonard Ellerbe, CEO of Mayweather Promotions and possibly Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions.

A representative of the law firm O'Melveny and Myers, Daniel Petrocelli, will also attend the meeting.

Petrocelli filed a lawsuit on behalf of Pacquiao on Wednesday seeking compensatory and punitive damages for defamation of character against Schaefer and Oscar De La Hoya of Golden Boy Promotions, as well as Floyd Mayweather Jr., his father Floyd Sr. and uncle Roger Mayweather.

The suit seeks damages in excess of $75,000 for Pacquiao, who contends that the camp of Mayweather damaged his reputation by insinuating he used steroids or other illegal drugs to boost his performances.

The Mayweathers began attacking their drug-related insinuations and accusations after Pacquiao's convincing demolition of Oscar Dela in 135 pounds. De La Hoya at 147, Ricky Hatton at 140 and Miguel Cotto at 140.

In 2006, Petrocelli successfully won a judgment between Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions over the rights to promote Pacquiao, who had signed with both groups.

Arum reportedly said that for the negotiations to resume, the Mayweathers must drop their demand for random blood testing and instead require public apology to Pacquiao, whose 136-round stoppage of Cotto gave him a record seventh title in as many weight classes.

Since yielding a unanimous decision to Erik Morales in March 2006, Pacquiao is unbeaten in his last 11 fights. He stopped Morales in the 10th and third rounds in subsequent bouts.

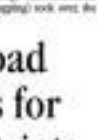
If negotiations for Mayweather-Pacquiao fail, apart, Arum is considering World Boxing Association junior welterweight (154 lb) champion Yuri Foreman (28-0, eight KOs) as he the Filipino icon's next opponent in a fight initially slated for March 29 at The Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas.

MANNY Pacquiao (left) wards an apology; Floyd Mayweather demands blood tests.

HAMBYTHE MIDDLE Retired federal judge Daniel Weinstein (left) successfully mediated a dispute between Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions over the right to promote the Filipino superstar's fights.

Two road games for RP Patriots this week

By Jasmine W. Payo



	W	L
Philippine Patriots	2	1
Singapore Slingers	2	1
Indonesia Warriors	2	1
Brunei Darussalam Rangers	1	2
Malaysia Dragons	1	2
Thailand Honda Jazz	1	2

LAST TUESDAY'S RESULT
Philippine Patriots 83
Singapore Slingers 78
Philippine Patriots

THE LEAGUE LEADing Philippine Patriots resume their bid for top seeding this weekend with back-to-back road games in the Asean Basketball League this week.

Still three games ahead of their closest pursuers, the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP)-owned Patriots will be one-foot-of their last four eliminations games to nail the No. 1 spot.

The Patriots, coming off a two-week break, clash with the Singapore Slingers on Friday, 7 p.m. in the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

From Singapore, the Patriots will fly to Malaysia to battle the Kuala Lumpur Dragons on Saturday at the Malaya Indoor Stadium.

The Patriots—led by American import Jayson Dixon and Bandolo Powell and locals Nonoy Baclao, Elmer Espiritu and Marcio Yturbe—are leading it over the six-nation tournament with a 9-2 record.

Bolstered by Filipino guard Al Vergara, the Slingers are coming second at 9-5, followed by Indonesia Satria Muda Bakrie at 8-5.

Singapore victory will keep the Slingers in contention for the top semifinal berth.

"The team is still very competitive even after the break," said coach Louie Alas before the team's departure yesterday.

The Patriots will wrap up the eliminations at home on Jan. 24 versus the Brunei Darussalam.

SPORTSWATCH

Forum moves to PSC venue

THE PBA FORUM HOLDOUT FIRST SEEson for this year today at the drawing held at the Philippine Sports Commission at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila.

Appearing as special guest in the 10:30 a.m. session is amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines executive director Ed Picson who will talk about the plans of the RP boxing team after its successful five-gold medal haul in the recent 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

The weekly public sports program sponsored by Pagcor, Accel, Dulcet Battery and Shakey's Pizza also has regular series at Shakey's SM Megamall and other.

Milo Checkmate bets

EIGHT MILO CHECKMATE PLAYERS COMpete for slots in the team bound for the 2nd Battle of the Stars tournament on Jan. 18 starting at 10:30 a.m. at the second floor of SM Fairview Square in Novaliches.

Tonight, who all advanced from the qualifying tournament to their respective age groups, are 6-Shallow Caeub, Justine Talam-Macapaz, Stephanie Ryan Sison, Richmond Dingcong and Josephine Mo-Yi (under) and Dennis Aquino, Ronalie Alcances and Ross Bandoma (seniors).

Five slots will be disputed—three in the 7-9 under section and two in the senior level.

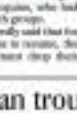
Already seeded to the team by virtue of their finish in elimination Malcolm Kwok, 13, Claudia Dee Jr., 13, and Carmella Galan, 14.

Meanwhile, four Checkmate enablers receive invitational seeds recently.

Six-year-old Stephen Pierre Pangilinan topped the 6-under division of the 2009 Senior Finger World Open girls and Boys tournament in Las Vegas while Jerry Gilbuit, 12, defended Grandmaster Invitational title at Las Vegas International Chess Festival.

Kevin Anthony Goat and Daniel Lopez also earned a good account of themselves in the recent Melbourne Chess Club Wednesday Cup. Their individual 10/11 event sponsored by Plaridel Industries Inc., Dasmariñas City, Daniel School of Quezon City and Special Science Quiz 7-15-16 chapter.

Wanted: Gentleman trouble-shooter for RP sports



BARE EYE
Abcede
Trinidad

THEY CAN'T GO ON WINNING LIKE this...angrily divided...but the Philippine Olympic Committee absolutely thinks otherwise.

In fact, one avid backer of Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, the POC president, acted as see the award tonight that there was nothing wrong with the POC president leading Laos as a crucial point of the Philippine campaign in the 2009 Vientiane Games.

"There was nothing oppressive about Peping (Cojuangco) and Steve (Hontiveros) leaving Laos when they did," explained the Cojuangco backer who shall remain unidentified for now.

* * *

By coincidence: "In fact, at about halftime, all POC presidents and secretary-gen go home (if they even go to the Games). Peping and Steve were the last to leave and, while in Laos, they were all over the place cheering our competitors on."

That was a hard sell to anyone.

"At the SEA Games, the chief demission's sudden departure would be cause for alarm [if didn't happen to act as he even surrounds NOC officers at any Games]," it was added. "POC leaders finish their SEA Games council meetings, set the directions for the future and go home."

* * *

It's all noise of, not intimidation as Olympism crossed.

But, as previously stated here, what was rather unsettled, if not totally unexpected, was the happy turn of events for Team Philippines at the opening ceremonies, capsule of the expedition, had left.

So did Cojuangco do wrong in leaving Laos unannounced, a move that caught athletes and members of the Manila media by surprise?

"The magic of it all was how Filipino athletes—even Cojuangco had left—savored was seven gold medal harvests for two successive days to ensure the Philippines would no longer languish in the stinking cellar," we stated in a previous column.

Now, this is not to suggest Cojuangco should get a parent for that surprise win-win move and do it in Vientiane Games.

* * *

The clear call for him is to play the true gentleman, before like an uncle of Stepney Aquino, fast-emerging

SUERTE KITA Winner in 3:21.13

MOLINA with Milo's Pet Goo-ong

Longtime marathon sponsor honors Buenavista, Banayag

TWO FORMER NATIONAL MILO MARATHON champions exhibited their prowess in the recent 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

Eduardo Buenavista and Rodrigo Banayag, who both ruled the country's premier race in past seasons, produced the two Philippine marathon runny that installed athletes as the big achievers with seven gold medals.

"It is a source of great pride and privilege to support our local athletes all the way to their victory," Nestle skill and Milo sports events executive Pat Gee-ong said.

Double-gold winners Miguel Molina of swimming and Mikaela' Batidor Asok, both also hailed by Milo, likewise boasted ISPs gold on runs along with underworld-a damage Filomeno Go and Mary Antoinette Rivera.

"Milo knows the importance of raising awareness about the values and benefits of sports to Filipinos, especially among the young, which is why we remain one of the strongest supporters of the SEA Games," said Gee-ong.

Buenavista captured the men's title in 2 hours, 23 minutes, 10 seconds, while Banayag ruled with a time of 2:46.34. Jasmine W. Payo

Henin back, slams door on Petrova

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—JUSTINE HENIN made a winning comeback from retirement Monday, beating second-seeded Nadia Petrova of Russia, 7-5, 7-5, in the first round of the Brisbane International.

The 27-year-old Belgian, who quit the tour in May 2008 while she held the No. 1 ranking, was too good for the 26th-ranked Petrova in her first official tour match since announcing her comeback in September.

She played a consistent game, despite dropping serve to open the second set, and took advantage as Petrova's husband re-

HENIN

tired gifted up.

After updating to the net and producing ace after ace, the 25-time tennis champion Henin clinched victory with some play qualifier Iveta Benesova of Kazakhstan, who beat Australia's Casey Dellacqua, 6-2, 6-0, 7-6 (7-1).

Henin is playing in Brisbane this week and Sydney next week on solid card entries as she prepares for the Australian Open, her first major in two years.

Earlier, 2008 French Open champion Ana Ivanovic beat Jelena Dokic, 7-5, 1-6, 6-3, in her first tour match in three months.

The third-seeded Ivanovic won the last three games after a tight tussle with Dokic, converting her second match point after the Australian dumped a forehand into the net.

The 22-year-old Ivanovic hasn't played since a first-round exit at Tokyo in September, which followed a disappointing first-round exit at the US Open.

Richard Gasquet, returning from a ruptured filled six months, beat Finland's Jarkko Nieminen, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

It was the Frenchman's first tournament since a bout of tendonitis on his upper ruling took the uncertainty out of his immediate career, following months of distress which started when a sloping toe late March stunted losses of sessions. AP

PHILADELPHIA'S Allen Iverson loses the ball under pressure from Denver's Nuggets

Lakers trounce Mavs; Sixers edge Nuggets

LOS ANGELES—JORDAN FARMAR led seven players in double figures with 14 points as the Los Angeles Lakers trounced the Western Conference's second-best team in a 131-86 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Sunday.

Andrew Bynum had 13 points on 6 of 6 shooting, five rebounds and four assists, Lamar Odom had 13 points and 15 rebounds and Kobe Bryant 13 points and eight assists.

Sasha Vujacic and Shannon Brown added 11 each and Derek Fisher 10 for the defending NBA champions, who improved to a league-best 27-6.

Dirk Nowitzki had 22 points and eight rebounds for the Mavericks, who never led and were gravely thin on its game. Jason Kidd was scoreless in 27 minutes.

At Denver, Allen Iverson scored 27 points and Elton Brand added 16 as the Philadelphia 76ers held off a hot-two rally to beat the injury-riddled Denver Nuggets, 108-105.

Nene had 24 points and 15 rebounds, and Ty Lawson scored 23 points for the Nuggets, who have lost six of eight.

The Nuggets played their second game in as many nights without their top two scorers. Carmelo Anthony (right knee contusion) and Chauncey Billups (left groin strain) sat out the game.

It was Iverson's second game in Denver since he was traded last year.

At Cleveland, Ronald Murray hit a three-pointer with 56 seconds left to put Charlotte up for good as the Bobcats beat Cleveland, 91-86.

Stephen Jackson scored 22 points, Gerald Wallace added 19 and Raymond Felton had 17 for Charlotte, which won for the first time in Quicken Loans Arena after 10 straight losses.

LeBron James scored 29 points for the Cavs. AP

STAND: Jazz 16, Spurs 16; Rockets 12, Nuggets 10

CABAGNOT

DAVID

David, Cabagnot switch squads

By Marc B. Castillo

GARY DAVID IS COMING HOME and Alex Cabagnot hopes to find a permanent one in his latest transfer.

The two-way guards were the primary personalities in a four-player deal involving Purefoods' King and Coca-Cola, with David returning to his team where he started his pro career and Cabagnot finding himself in a third PBA squad in four years.

Coca-Cola acquired David and point guard Glenn Labura from Burger King after giving up Cabagnot and reinforcement Wesley Gonzalez. The deal was consummated only last night although negotiations stretched over months ago.

David's transfer secures him with former Ateneo coach Joe Monteiro, who guided the Tigresses to a second place finish in the 2006 Philippine Cup.

He also gives the Tigers a legitimate perimeter threat, something which Cabagnot and Gonzalez never got to provide on a consistent basis in the ongoing KFC-PBA Philippine Cup.

Cabagnot, a pure point guard-dribbler-second-coverall by his Lucia in 2005 before being shipped on the Tigers in less than two seasons, averaged 13.4 points and six assists for the Tigers.

David was picked 10th overall by the Tigers in 2006. He has been a solid force in the league where he led to four three-shooting law seasons with an 85 percent clip while also leading the Whoppers in scoring with 17.2 points.

Wesley heads RP's Asian Chess bid

By Roy Luarca

FOURTH-SEEDED MENSHON WESLEY So and two other Filipino World Cup campaigners will spearhead the Philippine campaign in the 2013 Asian Individual Chess Championship set April 28 to 30 at the Subic Exhibition and Convention Center.

The 20-year-old So, now ranked No.5 in the world in the latest Fide quarterly list with his highest Elo rating ever of 2810, and fellow GMs Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. and Darwin Layla will vie for four 2013 World Cup berths at stake.

The events is being hosted by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) for the third time in four years.

So, who is hosting on Jan. 13 to compete in Group B of the Corus tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, captured nipples in the recent World Cup by stunning beheaded championship Ukrainian rookie GMs Vassily Ivanchuk of Ukraine and Gen Kamsky of the United States and reaching the round-of-16.

Also gearing for a return trip to the World Cup to be held again in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, are Antonio and Layla, who both dropped their first-round matches.

The 47-year-old Antonio, the country's second Mykhaylo-rated player with an Elo of 2572, is eyeing his fourth World Cup appearance, while Layla, now No. 3 with an Elo of 2550, is seeking his third world championship appearance.

Other Filipino hopefuls include GMs John Paul Gomez, Eugene Torre, Mark Paragua, Jayson Gonzales and Buenaventura's "Bong Villamayor.

SO

Just the way Floyd Jr. is

MANNY PACQUIAO HAS PRACtically bested every able fighter in different weights within his range to be the proud five-pound king today.

Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, Juan Manuel Marquez, Miguel Cotto—without a doubt, an impressive roster of fight victims that none of us would have dreamed Pacquiao ever beating, until the Pacman grabbed them all up.

But now his biggest fight is already happening outside the ring, before any ink is left on a contract and any winning begins.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and his camp have fingered an Olympic-style penalty drug testing to ensure that Pacquiao is clean from Performance Enhancing Drugs (PED). There is a suspicion from the Mayweather end that Pacquiao has achieved his fame because of PEDs.

* * *

It is an unsubstantiated claim at best.

Pacquiao has time and again tested clean when the Nevada boxing commission does its random tests. But the Mayweather side wants blood testing to detect possible substances that cannot be revealed by routine urine checks.

The stub has lifted Pacquiao, forcing him to axe Mayweather and others in a United States court, even as negotiations continue and urine tests are being done to save the fight.

There all this lead to an exciting fight if it ever pushes through on March 13?

* * *

The fight, in itself, does not need anymore hype. Pairing the

current proud five-pound king against the one-time holder of that mythical title is more than enough.

Mayweather likes to needle his opponents as part of his pre-fight routine. Talking to his way of dealing with the misery and excitements of a fight. If you get sucked into his vortex, then you could be ripe for his speed and defensive plans.

Pacquiao is not a crash talker or a taunter. He may have no entertainment a touch, but talking for like Mayweather before but he is not going to lose his cool now or inside the ring.

He is going to allow Mayweather up with his gloves on but will do it with a strategy whipped up together with Freddie Roach.

* * *

It is still five fight everyone wants to see.

Sportswriters around the world want the prefight disagreements to stop and see Pacquiao-Mayweather inside the ring.

Filipinos and the Pacman faithful everywhere want to see their idol finally silencing Mayweather.

Pacquiao non-believers want to see how he will fare against the undefeated Mayweather.

Expect one thing though. No matter what the result is, Penny Boy will probably keep on talking because that's just the way he is.

Pacquiao battles Team Mayweather in court

CLEAN LIVING

Marvido R. Ildigo

ONE OF THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES HOGging the limelight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. is the blood testing dispute.

Immediately set for March 13 this year at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, the host for a long-time Team Mayweather and Golden Boy Promotions, headed by former boxing champion Oscar De La Hoya, screamed the Filipino ring kingpin's performance-enhancing drugs when he would re-enter fight.

Pacquiao's detractors also wanted the 34-time fighter to undergo a new set of anti-drug tests, including an Olympic-style urine and blood testing.

The holder of an unprecedented seven titles in seven different weight divisions, Pacquiao (80-3 knocks of determination) against Team Mayweather for humiliating and destroying his reputation as a boxer.

Named by several boxing websites as their 2009 Fighter of the Year, Pacquiao had emphasized that he has no objections to drug testing as required by the Nevada State Athletic Commission, which has jurisdiction over the super fight.

"I will provide any specimen, whether it be blood or urine samples, right after the fight but not a day or two before it," said a visibly angry Pacquiao.

He explained that he had always "bit word" every time a blood test is conducted within hours or a few days before his fight. But he stressed that he was willing to undergo blood testing 30 days before the fight.

Bob Arum, Pacquiao's American promoter and top honcho of Top Rank Promotions, said he has proposed to allow the Nevada commission to have the final say in solving the drug-testing controversy.

"We will go along with what the Nevada commission decides," Arum said. "We want the fight to go forward."

If the Pacquiao-Mayweather fight is not held on March 13, Arum plans to pit Pacquiao against newly-crowned World Boxing Association junior welterweight champion Ruslan Provodnikov. Arum had earlier suggested Italian-American Paulie Malignaggi as a replacement, but Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer, suggested a duel involving between Pacquiao and Mexico's Jesus Manuel Chavez.

Nevertheless, there is still a chance for Pacquiao and Mayweather, who boxes an unbeaten record in 40 pro fights, to meet sometime in September.

* * *

In the Olympics, the top four finishers after an event plus others chosen at random are tested for illegal drug use.

Here is how it works:

1. Athlete is designated for testing after an event and reports to the testing station.

2. Athlete may drink only from sealed containers.

3. Athlete can't leave testing area until providing at least one sample of urine.

4. Urine is divided into A and B samples and shipped to a laboratory.

5. Laboratory uses urine on A sample, placing B sample in a locked refrigerator.

6. If A sample test is positive, a result is done. If second test is positive, the IOC (International Olympic Committee) notifies the athlete's national Olympic committee.

7. Athlete may attend meeting of B sample. If B sample is positive, the athlete is banned and loses any medal.

Athletes are entitled to an appeal hearing with the IOC Medical Commission. That appeal is made through Court of Arbitration for Sports.

NCA opens year with 5-cock derby today at Ynares

THE YEAR OF THE TIGER BECOMES even more exciting as the National Cockers Alliance (NCA) holds a Mondinder 5-cock derby today at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The formidable team of Jerry Ramos and Bertie Buenaedia, two of the country's most outstanding cockers, will host today's derby.

Among the participants are Ito Ysasmo, JV Magsaysay, Elmer Nepomuceno, Patrick Antonio, Mario Villanueva, Jonne Uy, Manny and Arman Santos, Jimmy Ong, Jun Sanchez, Ernie Asencio, Rey Silva, Bernie Medalla, Tommy Chua and Quing Ayla Cruz, T. Revilla, Eric dela Rama, Sonny Tevez, Bebot Villar, Rudy Albano, the Cebu and Batangas groups, Raul Rocafort, Efren Cimbar, Angie Sanchez, Mendhaughayan brothers and Art Fernandez Jr.

Following today's derby is the NCA World Championship Derby (NCA-WCD) on Jan. 12, 14 and 16. The derby squared to be among the toughest and most prestigious derby in the world, will have Asian cocks joining the fight.

May bago na namang kwento!

PLDT landline PLUS Prepaid

TODO DISKWENTO PLANS

With FREE Local Calls*

Ngayon, lahat ng local calls walang metro at walang limit*.
Kaya ang landline kwento, mas masaya at mas kumpleto.

Kaya bilis! Mag-DisKwento Plans na!

How to subscribe:

- Just buy a PLDT Landline Plus Prepaid SIM. (for new subscribers only)
- Register to DisKwento Plan P399 or P599. (for new and existing subscribers)

How to register:

- Make sure that you have at least P399 or P599 load in your e-wallet.
- Register to any DisKwento Plan and enjoy free local calls for 30 days.

Go! Register on February 10, 2010 and enjoy free local calls until March 17, 2010.

With 2 plans to choose from:

P399 FREE Local Calls

P599 FREE Local Calls

Dial #101*399 or #101*599 to register to your new monthly plan.

CALL 101-328 FOR DETAILS

Valid for 30 days only.
For ECQ and Powered by 4Play Series of 2009.
Promo period is from December 16, 2009 to February 15, 2010.

PLDT

Aplus METRO
Gino Abalardo S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

JOSE Rizal's death sentence issued on Dec. 30, 1896 stated that if he were pardoned, he would have to be imprisoned for life and pay the State P10,000.
Cyril L. Bonabbelor, Inquirer Research

Clear out, MMDA tells vendors

Eviction notices served as ban on clearing operations lapses

By Allison W. Lopez

VENDORS WHO WERE ALLOWED BY THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to sell their wares on sidewalks for the duration of the holiday season were asked yesterday to voluntarily pack up and clear out.

According to MMDA Chair Oscar Inocencio, they have already issued eviction notices to vendors in Balintawak and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City as well as those in C. M. Recto, Divisoria, Carriedo and Blumentritt in Manila.

The vendors have been given more than enough time to comply during the MMDA-imposed moratorium on sidewalk clearing operations which lapsed on Dec. 31, he said.

"Pedestrians are the rightful owners of the sidewalks. We should give it back to them," the MMDA chair added.

Inocencio, a former judge, said that as a condition for the imposition of the moratorium, the vendors agreed that they would vacate the sidewalks voluntarily after Dec. 31.

"As we have promised, there will be no use of force or intimidation. We will give them notices asking them to voluntarily leave the area or tear down all their illegal structures themselves. We believe we can settle this matter without anyone getting hurt," he said.

On Saturday, the Manila City government and MMDA Sanitary/Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group cleared up Bulacan-Espeleta Road in Sta. Cruz after sidewalk vendors voluntarily left the area.

Meanwhile, business establishments that have encroached on sidewalks were also given a few days to remove the structures which were in violation of the National Building Code.

QC justice hall named model office in recycling

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT has tried the Hall of Justice in the city hall complex for its environment-friendly waste disposal program.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. recently named the justice hall a model office in recycling after it registered the biggest volume of recyclable trash in waste baskets in which recyclables can be readied for either cash or in kind.

Belmonte added that the four-story building was also recognized as the best among other departments in kitchen waste management.

The Hall of Justice houses the branches of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, and the local Public Attorney's Office.

Belmonte earlier ordered the implementation of waste segregation and management among the city government's departments and offices.

In an executive order, he cited the need to implement measures that would improve the existing solid waste management program at the city hall compound for sound garbage disposal.

On the other hand, the award for the model office in residual waste management was given to the administrative management office.

Under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, all local government units are required to reduce their solid waste by half.

GETTING READY FOR THE BIG DAY
Wilfredo Salvador of the Manila City Engineer's Office decorates with plastic flowers the pillars in front of Quiapo Church. The city grew venues, in coordination with the police, a busy preparing for the Feast of the Black Nazarene on Jan. 9. ALVIN KASIBA

Discounts offered for early bird taxpayers

By Allison W. Lopez

THE MAKATI CITY GOVERNMENT yesterday urged property owners to pay their taxes early to avoid thousands of discounts and speedy service at electronic payment centers.

Mayor Jejomar Binay said a 10-percent discount would be given to those who pay their realty taxes on an annual basis, while a five-percent discount would be offered to those paying on a quarterly basis.

A five-percent discount will also be given if payment is made in the first 20 days of the quarter. Taxpayers who fail to pay during the period will incur a monthly penalty of two percent.

Binay said that starting today, the city's electronic realty tax payment centers would be open in 13 barangays for the convenience of taxpayers.

The 13 barangays scheduled to accept payments for realty taxes are: Bel-Air, San Lorenzo, Bangkal, Dasmariñas, Dec. 7; Forbes Park, Jan. 8; San Lorenzo, Jan. 9 and 11; Magallanes, Jan. 12; Urdaneta, Jan. 12; Tejeros, Jan. 14; San Antonio, Jan. 14; Bangkal, Jan. 15; Pio del Pilar, Jan. 15; Guadalupe Nuevo, Jan. 16; East Rembo, Jan. 16, and West Rembo, Jan. 18.

Payments will be accepted from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Pontifical and Royal
UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
The Catholic University of the Philippines
1611

STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION

The University of Santo Tomas community sincerely appreciates and deeply admires the courage and calm determination of Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes, an alumna of the UST Faculty of Civil Law 1986, when she decided to accept the responsibility of presiding over the controversial case spawned by the infamous Maguindanao incident, despite the risk to her personal safety.

The University of Santo Tomas community assures Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes of its continuing prayers for divine protection and guidance so she can effectively and credibly handle this difficult case. May she carry on the almost 400-year old tradition of greatness set by countless alumni of UST who, in their unostentatious way, have lived up to the ideals and teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The University of Santo Tomas community calls on all Filipinos to pray for, and extend wholehearted support to every initiative to dismantle the culture of violence and lawlessness afflicting our country, and to supplant this with the regime of truth, justice, and peace, a regime that can come about only through the grace of God. For, *"unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do its builders labor." (Psalm 127:1)*

Clean up or close down, Lim warns market owners

By Jeannette I. Andrade

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim threatened yesterday to close down privately-owned markets should their officials fail to prevent the piling up of garbage in their areas.

At the same time, Lim gave the suppliers of those markets the option of cleaning up after themselves or else, they would be banned from making deliveries.

In a meeting, the mayor ordered chief of staff Bu dy Dumlao and city department of public services head Carlos Baltazar to hold a dialogue with the city's private market operators to inform them of his directive.

"It is their choice. Either they clean up or they will be closed down," Lim stressed as he pointed out the need for strict compliance among market operators.

He added that in the case of businessmen who supply markets with their goods, they should avoid leaving their garbage behind for the city government to clean up.

He said that suppliers and dealers must bring their garbage to Pier 18 at the North Harbor in Tondo where the city's dump is located.

"Those suppliers, who should they be allowed to enter Manila just to leave their garbage behind? That will be an additional burden to us. If they cannot bring their garbage to Pier 18, then we should not let them enter Manila," the mayor told city officials during the meeting.

Lim emphasized that while the city supports businesses, traders should follow garbage and sanitary regulations.

MAYOR Alfredo Lim spearheads a cleanup of Carriedo Street in Sta. Cruz, Manila, on New Year's Day. JAY ISRAEL

That's how callous GMA has become

ON TARGET
RANDY DAVID

UP TO NOW, THE ARMED forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Department of National Defense (DND) refuse to answer the question of this space that P400 million was stolen from the vault of the Ampatuan mansion in Maguindanao.

Army troops secured the mansion at the height of the shoot-first-and-arrest-law period in Maguindanao.

When journalists were allowed into the mansion, they found the vault empty.

There was no entry from reporters apparently because they took the word of Army troops that when they got to the mansion, they found the vault open and empty.

But my sources in the Philippine National Police (PNP), which played a secondary role in the martial law imposed in Maguindanao, said P400 million was taken from the vault.

The PNP doesn't want to investigate the reported P400 million as a matter of curiosity to the AFP.

* * *

The deafening silence of the AFP and DND, as well as Malacañang, on the reported P400-million larceny is very tolerated.

Perhaps the AFP and Malacañang think that if they ignored the reported theft, it would cease to be forgotten.

Maguindanao's treatment of celebrants of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's birthday on the 5th of February is the worst of Arroyo from others they got to the mansion, they found the vault open and empty.

But my sources in the Philippine National Police (PNP), which played a secondary role in the martial law imposed in Maguindanao, said P400 million was taken from the vault.

The PNP doesn't want to investigate the reported P400 million as a matter of curiosity to the AFP.

* * *

The deafening silence of the AFP and DND, as well as Malacañang, on the reported P400-million larceny is very tolerated.

Perhaps the AFP and Malacañang think that if they ignored the reported theft, it would cease to be forgotten.

Maguindanao's treatment of celebrants of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's birthday on the 5th of February is the worst of Arroyo from others they got to the mansion, they found the vault open and empty.

But my sources in the Philippine National Police (PNP), which played a secondary role in the martial law imposed in Maguindanao, said P400 million was taken from the vault.

The PNP doesn't want to investigate the reported P400 million as a matter of curiosity to the AFP.

* * *

The deafening silence of the AFP and DND, as well as Malacañang, on the reported P400-million larceny is very tolerated.

Perhaps the AFP and Malacañang think that if they ignored the reported theft, it would cease to be forgotten.

Maguindanao's treatment of celebrants of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's birthday on the 5th of February is the worst of Arroyo from others they got to the mansion, they found the vault open and empty.

But my sources in the Philippine National Police (PNP), which played a secondary role in the martial law imposed in Maguindanao, said P400 million was taken from the vault.

The PNP doesn't want to investigate the reported P400 million as a matter of curiosity to the AFP.

* * *

The deafening silence of the AFP and DND, as well as Malacañang, on the reported P400-million larceny is very tolerated.

Perhaps the AFP and Malacañang think that if they ignored the reported theft, it would cease to be forgotten.

Murder raps to be filed vs 4 in bodyguard's death

By DJ Yap

THE NOBLESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT yesterday they are set to press charges against four suspects in the murder of the bodyguard of the son of Mayor Jesse Cruz, but they refused to name names.

Supt. Raul Mateo, Rodriguez police chief, said they would file charges against the suspects within the week, "hopefully including the mastermind."

The police are still tracking down the gunmen who shot and killed retired policeman Ricardo Arnaiz, Cruz's close-in security, at a public market on Dec. 31.

Mateo said they are considering personal grudge as the most likely motive in Arnaiz's killing, although he added they are not discounting a political assassination.

Bong Molde, one of the suspects who was killed during the incident, was a former bodyguard of suspended Rodriguez Mayor Rubyr Cuerpo, a policeman, SPO2 Danilo Zuñiga, who spoke to reporters said was also killed, while a female bystander was wounded.

The Rizal and Rodriguez police yesterday conducted a case conference about the murder, but Mateo refused to give specific details about their findings.

He only said some witnesses had come out to identify the other suspects.

"We're focusing on finding the gunmen. And when we find them, we'll make sure arrestees on the mastermind," Mateo said.

Pasay mayor says SC ruling makes him eligible to run for city's top post again

By Nita Calleja

PASAY CITY MAYOR WENCES Isa "Pwenes" Trinidad, who was removed from office in 2007 only to be reinstated that same year, said he is now eligible to seek another term following a Supreme Court ruling clarifying the applicability of the three-term limit to suspended or deposed officials.

"My position was strengthened by the court's decision," Trinidad said, adding he was both elated and vindicated.

Trinidad added that he was dead set on running for reelection. "The propagandists of my opponents are killed-siling and misinforming the public by telling about the [high tribunal's ruling and telling] only half of the story," he said.

In a ruling promulgated on Dec. 21, the high court said that elected public officials who had been placed under preventive suspension cannot use temporary terms to circumvent the three-term limit.

The ruling was prompted by a case involving the disqualification of a Lucena City councilor. According to the court, his term was not interrupted by the preventive suspension imposed on him in 2005.

Shooting mars procession; 1 dead, 3 hurt

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A TEENAGE DEVOTEE OF THE Black Nazarene was killed while three others were injured when they were attacked on Sunday morning by a group of assailants during a procession celebrating the feast of the translación in Manila.

Kevin Solomon, 17, a resident of Imelda St. Street in Tondo, was declared dead on arrival by attending doctors at the Mary Johnston Hospital from a gunshot wound to the chest.

Another devotee, 14-year-old Jayson Mendoza, also of Tondo, was hit in the nape. He remains confined at the Mary Johnston Hospital.

Two other men were hurt in the shooting incident but Manila Police District (MPD) homicide section investigators were not able to identify them.

They also failed to determine which hospital the men were taken to.

Case investigator PO2 Joseph Eshigaing said the shooting took place at around 9 p.m. on Sunday at the corner of Tanday Bio and Lamon Streets in Tondo.

Eshigaing added that Solomon, Mendoza and the other victims were attending the barangay-organized procession of the Black Nazarene when a group of unidentified hitmen in hats and shades approached them behind and shot him in the back with a notepad. Simultaneously shotgun at close range.

The police ruled from Solomon's body and hit the shooters standing near him as the shooting who had set to be identified, fled.

Celebrities out to make their mark in politics

By Tina G. Santos

THE 2010 ELECTIONS WILL BE synonymous with much-said drama and which some won't.

In Manila, several celebrities factor Become Good but into the political mix, hoping to translate their popularity into a seat on the city council.

Actors Lorenzo "Lito" Alonzo and John Marvin "Jed Saver" Nieto are both seeking reelection, while former child star Robert Ortega, who starred on the city council for three terms, is running a comeback.

A new face in local politics is former basketball player Noli "Bong" Alvarez, who is running for councilor in Quiapo where he grew up.

Pros and cons

According to Alonzo, while people look at their celebrity status as an advantage, it could also work the other way around. "Some people tend to associate their every move.

"We may get free publicity because we appear in films, theater and television, plus we earn good pay. But it just so happens that this is our job. For us to be politicians is another ball game altogether. Many times, we're looking just like people who take a closer look at our lives, which is harder," Alonzo told the Inquirer.

Like Sotto, Alonzo has made his mark in films. He also, however, knows that his acting career has not affected his work as a councilor.

"Our work in the city council is basically legislative so, as much as possible, I never let that [his personal showing city council] matter. Apart from that, my other obligations for my constituents, I believe I am able to use my position to promote arts and culture by doing stage plays involving people in the communities, and by holding workshops for aspiring writers and production designers," he said.

At this year's Gawad Urian Awards, Alonzo bagged the Best Actor trophy for his dramatic performance in "Sukatan," where he played an ex-convict who had killed a crime—the same role that won him the Best Actor plum at the annual Metro Manila Film Festival.

He was also named Best Supporting Actor in a commercial role by Aliw Awards for his performance in "I Miss Him Also." Before this, he was bestowed the Gintong sa Sulirsan award by the Manila City government for his contributions in the arts, culture and public service.

Ortega, who started out in shows like in the Ambassador was not related entirely down "That's Entertainment," is opting a comeback on the local political scene.

In 2007, he ran for vice mayor but lost to another actor. The Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, who is up for reelection next year.

Political rookie

On the other hand, Alvarez, who reportedly just came back from Sydney, Australia, where he had his family had migrated, is running the political waters for the first time.

Known as Mr. Excitement in Philippine basketball, Alvarez was embroiled in some controversies in the past.

Two years ago, he found himself in the middle of a different ball game after he was charged with physical injuries by two people, including an ABS-CBN news reporter, who accused him of attacking them at a police station in Mandaluyong City.

One of the people who filed charges against him, Erwinbee Maldrid of ABS-CBN, claimed Alvarez, who was drunk, hit her in the face and pulled her hair.

Alvarez, meanwhile, denied the accusations against him, saying he was the victim because Maldrid punched him several times.

METRO Citizen's Call

Your Step of Affections and Recollections
is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.

- Did a sidewalk make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street somehow pissed you?
- Seen slippage forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up to arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Saved by a Bida-Bayan barangay project with a big positive impact to your community?
- Too much in politics?
- Fed up with roaring and fearing neighbors?
- In dire an everyday one model in your neighborhood?
- Brought adventure there on your way to work?

JUST TEXT [illegible]

0918-8965566

P.S. [illegible]

INQUIRER

METROBRIEFS

Malabon cop in trouble for firing gun

A PO1 CITIZEN from Malabon City has been placed under investigation after he allegedly discharged his firearm inside a bar in Pasay City on New Year's eve. PO2 Hector Medrano of the Malabon Police Station reinforcement Branch voluntarily surrendered over the weekend to his superior, Senior Insp. Reynaldo Lacsamana, chief of the Police Operations Malabon police chief, said in a report submitted to the Southern Police District that they started investigating Medrano based on information they received from the Manila Police District Board on the incident. Medrano fired a gun on Dec. 31 on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay. Manila. Alfonso, a 6-year-old boy. Villanueva said he immediately issued an order directing Medrano to surrender to his supervisor. Chief Insp. Edgar Tadeo. Villanueva added that Medrano had been placed under restriction pending the results of their investigation of the incident.

Anonymous / Jhatsdad

PR men to elect officers on Jan. 8

THE Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) will elect its board of directors for 2010 on Jan. 8 at the Bel-Air and North Forbes rooms of the Intercontinental Manila in Makati City. Ballots will be cast from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The 2010 election committee is composed of Sonny Fidanza, APR, chair; and Atty. Melvyn B. Martin, APR, and June T. Campos, APR, members. Qualified members for the board of directors should be regular members in good standing who have been with the society continuously for at least one year before the election. They should also be lifetime members, namely, 20 past presidents of the society who under the PRSP by-laws can be elected to the board of directors. Qualified voters should be lifetime members and regular members in good standing who have been regular members for at least three years.

Blast kills four US soldiers

BAGRAM—FOUR UNITED STATES soldiers serving under the NATO force have been killed in a bomb blast in southern Afghanistan, days after seven CIA agents died in a suicide bombing, the alliance said on Monday.

The blast near serving with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and were caught in a blast in a southern Taliban hotspot on Sunday. They were the first reported foreign military deaths in Afghanistan in 2010.

Those ISAF service members from the United States died yesterday following an IED strike in southern Afghanistan," the ISAF statement said, referring to an improvised explosive device—the Taliban weapon of choice.

The blast deaths come after seven US CIA agents were killed on Wednesday when a suicide bomber blew himself up on a military base in eastern Khost province, and left the foreign military deaths now in Afghanistan.

An Afghan police official speaking on condition of anonymity told AFP that the four soldiers were killed in Panjwayi district in Kandahar province, a Kandahar of Taliban unrest.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi called him and told AFP: "We claim responsibility for this attack." He gave the same location of the IED strikes as the police official.

Sunday's fatalities were the first reported foreign military deaths in Afghanistan this year, after 2009 saw 322 foreign troops killed in the country—the deadliest year since the 2001 US-led ouster of the Taliban regime.

Most troop deaths are caused by IEDs, home-made bombs used by the Taliban and other Islamist insurgents who are said to have little other capability to fight the well-armed Nato and Afghan troops.

There are more than 130,000 international troops under both US and Nato command deployed in Afghanistan to curb an increasingly deadly insurgency being waged by the successors of the Taliban. AFP

Harsh winter pummels China, Korea

BEIJING/SEOUL—HEAVY snows and biting cold pummelled North Asia on Monday, with the unusually harsh winter weather resulting up transport across south China and South Korea but unlikely to deal any lasting economic damage.

Beijing began the working week after a blast of harsh cold and heavy snow blanketed the capital and surrounding cities over the weekend, paralysing highways and hitting the cancellation of dozens of flights.

As the cold snap pressed east, swathes of the Korean peninsula were also hit by heavy snow on Monday, choking up the rush hour commuter in Seoul, where the main domestic airport, Gimpo, cancelled all domestic flights.

In China, there were no signs that the cold spell would trigger the weeks-long disruptions and power cuts that hit some parts of southern China in unusually icy weather in 2008.

The icy conditions could push up food prices temporarily by stalling shipments and damaging greenhouses, delay flights, and hold up business in Beijing and other cities for a few days.

But Yi Xianrong, an economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, said there would be no significant damage.

"This won't have any impact. It's too small and local," he said. "In fact, all the snow will be a positive thing for agriculture in southern China, which is usually getting the establishment of an inter-Korean dialogue body.

Inter-Korean ties have been strained since the conservative leader took office in 2008 and linked the South's massive aid and economic cooperation to progress in the North's nuclear disarmament.

Lee also repeated his call for North Korea to return "as soon as possible" to the six-party nuclear disarmament talks that Pyongyang quit nine months ago, so that the two neighbours can improve their relationship.

"For this, there needs to be a standing dialogue organisation between the South and the North," Lee said, without elaborating on the proposed body.

"I wish North Korea can sincerely open their heart and walk on the path of dialogue and cooperation."

A presidential official told AFP Lee had proposed in an interview with The Washington Post in April 2008 that both Koreas establish "permanent high-level liaison offices" in each other's capital.

But the official fell short of mentioning whether Lee meant the liaison offices in his proposal for an inter-Korean dialogue body.

On New Year's Day, North Korea, to a policy uniting joint editorial of its state newspapers, called for an end to hostile relations with the US and vowed to work towards a nuclear-free peninsula.

"The fundamental task for ensuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of Asia is to put an end to the hostile relationship between the DPRK (North Korea) and the USA," the editorial said.

"It is the consistent stand of the DPRK to establish a lasting peace system on the Korean Peninsula and make it nuclear-free through dialogue and negotiations." North Korea left-six-party nuclear disarmament talks in April last year in protest at international censure over its launch of a long-range rocket in May it tested its second nuclear test since 2006.

US envoy Stephen Bosworth visited the communist nation last month and reached a "common understanding" on the need to resume the talks, which group the two Koreas, Japan, China, Russia and the United States. However, no date has been fixed. AFP

CHINESE paramilitary police shovel snow off a walk way in Beijing on Monday. China's capital dug out from the weekend's heavy snowstorm to resume flights and reopen highways and raillines.

South Korea seeks 'turning point' in ties with North

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (AP) on Monday it was making "a turning point" in relations with South Korea and again urged its communist northern neighbor to disarm.

President Lee Myung-bak's remarks in Seoul as a call by North Korea on Friday for an end to hostile relations with South Korea's key ally, the United States, and a nuclear-free peninsula.

"This year, South Korea and North Korea should create a turning point in their relations," Lee said in a nationally televised New Year's address, say-

A FARMER tries to round up his horses from a flooded paddock near Coonamble in the Australian state of New South Wales. More than 1,000 people were forced to evacuate to higher ground.

Australian town declared disaster zone

SYDNEY—AUTHORITIES DECLARED two flooded farming regions in southwestern Australia natural disaster zones on Monday as residents in one town overwhelmed by record a rising river in hopes that it wouldn't break its levees.

State of Connamble and Bunyip districts in New South Wales, several hundred miles northwest of Sydney, have been isolated by floodwaters since heavy rains last week. While emergency crews in the region's capital rain was easy, towns and countryside were still eating their in the open waters and Connamble's Castlereagh River was expected to peak later Monday.

New South Wales state Premier Kristina Kenneally declared the two districts disaster zones on Monday, entitling them to state emergency funds including loans and subsidies.

"That will provide much needed longer-term help to residents, primary producers, business owners and councils," Kenneally said while on a tour of Connamble. "It will help them to rebuild."

On Sunday, emergency officials advised 1,200 residents in Connamble to relocate to safer parts of town away from the rising Castlereagh River. Despite wide areas in motorhomes and riverbeds lurched homes and cattle through the deep water to higher ground. Brown water submerged main roads in the town.

The Castlereagh River was expected to peak at about 5.3 meters, according to the Bureau of Meteorology. The levee stands 5.9 meters high in most places in others it is as low as 5.4 meters.

Some of the 4,000 residents of the district, however, have refused to leave their properties.

"I think they've seen the river up and down the last few days, and people don't believe there is a threat," Connamble Mayor Tim Horan told on Monday. "There we get a peak, we'll know what's going on, but as far as we're concerned, the evacuation order is still in place, and we still have to encourage people to stick by it."

But longtime resident Ken Baker said he was confident the levees would hold, and refused to leave his house while his wife and daughter evacuated.

"I know the river quite well," he told Macquarie Radio. "I've lived here all my life. I'm quite certain in my own mind that I don't need to evacuate."

Boothe, a district with a population of about 4,400, was declared by some of its livestock risk in a decade, leaving dozens of properties cut off from roads and forcing some farmers to fly livestock to higher ground.

The Darling River is expected to overflow its banks by Thursday, causing further misery flooding as it swells from rainfall further upstream, the Bureau of Meteorology predicts. AP

American journalist dies in car accident

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA—FORmer Washington Post outlook, mail Deborah Howell is being remembered as "a powerful force for good journalism" who was a loyal friend and an inspiring mentor as editor in the industry.

Howell, 66, died on Friday when she was struck by a car in Hoboken, a town of 10,000 people on the northeast coast of New Zealand's South Island.

Detective Sgt. John Hamilton of the Hoboken police department said on Monday that it appeared Howell was crossing a highway to take a picture when she stepped in front of a car in the far lane. Hamilton said it's possible she was "completely unaware of the vehicle."

Drivers in New Zealand warn of cars that left side of the road, not the right as in the United States, so pedestrians must look first in the direction opposite from their norm.

Hamilton said a full investigation was under way and would take some time. Police were looking at whether there were any tracks for charging the driver. The most common charge in such circumstances is careless driving causing death.

Howell was in New Zealand on vacation with her husband, E. Peter Maginnis, the former president of the four-campus University of Missouri system and the University of Minnesota.

Under Howell's leadership, the St. Paul Pioneer Press won two Pulitzer Prizes, in 1986 and 1991. AP

After over 22 years, Navy destroyer breaks record

BATH, MAINE—CRUISERS through the darkness in rough seas, the USS Sims encountered a rogue wave that smashed into the destroyer's bow, sending a shudder along the entire ship that knocked sleeping crew out of their bunks and damaged the sonar housing.

As alarms sounded, sleepy sailors scrambled to shore up the leak.

"We cracked the hull and kept on going like it was nothing," recited sailor Jonathan Stockhem, of Maryland, recalled. In fact, the 155-meter destroyer was never out of service for repairs during any deployment in the three years it served aboard as an electronic warfare technician.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, such as the USS Sims and USS Cole, which survived a terrorist suicide bombing in Yemen, have proven to be durable warhorses in the United States Navy.

Over the 22 years since construction of the first one began at Bath Iron Works, the ship has steamed into the record book: The destroyer's production line has churned out nine other battleship, cruiser, destroyer and frigate in US Navy history. The only warship in production for longer was the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, said Norman Polmar, a naval historian, author and analyst.

Thanks in a decision by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Arleigh Burke destroyer production will continue for at least a few more years. The defense budget signed by President Barack Obama in December includes money for the first of at least three more ships. There's talk of many more being built.

At Bath Iron Works, along the banks of the Kennebec River, there are three of the ships in various stages of production.

"They're fast and they move. And they're a lot of fun to drive," said Lt. Cmdr. Robert J. Brooks, executive officer of USS Wayne E. Meyer, a Bath-built destroyer commissioned in October.

Retired Rear Adm. Michael E. Mahon, the Navy's former deputy director of surface warfare, said the ships run no risk of being outdated any time soon.

"For the envy of the world," said Mahon. "Every surface warship officer in every navy in the world would love to command an Arleigh Burke."

The original warship was conceived during the Cold War, when Bath Iron Works was aware only dispatchers pounding, grinding, welding, plumbing and wiring ships at a furious pace to meet President Ronald Reagan's audacious goal of a 600-ship Navy. Shipbuilders toiled long hours, working effective around how to hear created by sudden inside steel hull segments that were hardening in the summer and cold in the winter.

The number of Bath shipbuilders peaked at 13,000 by the time the USS Arleigh Burke was commissioned on July 4, 1991.

Some Bath shipbuilders have spent virtually their entire careers doing nothing by making Arleigh Burke destroyers. AP

Editor Lorenza B. Ibarra

The WORLD

PASSENGERS and crew were to be re-screened in front of the security checkpoint at Terminal C in Newark International Airport in New Jersey on Jan. 3 after a man walked through the wrong side of a checkpoint without being screened. AFP/FILE

Tighter screening for US-bound flights

WASHINGTON—PASSENGERS FLYING TO THE United States faced tougher security measures on Monday after the United States government announced that people traveling from or via 14 "terror-linked" nations will now have to undergo "regulatory enhanced screening."

The new measures came in the wake of the botched Christmas Day bombing of a Northwest Airlines plane heading from Amsterdam to Detroit which has forced many airports and airlines to boost already tight security.

All passengers flying into the US from abroad will be subject to random screening or so-called "threat based" screening, the Transport Security Administration (TSA) said in a statement on Sunday.

It further mandated that "everyone traveling from or via one of 14 countries of interest will be required to undergo enhanced screening."

The tough rules were into effect on Monday and followed the foiled plane attack blamed on a 23-year-old Nigerian who had reportedly traveled to Yemen to train with al-Qaida.

Travelers from now also heightened on Sunday when flights out of one terminal at Newark International Airport were temporarily halted following a possible security breach.

The suspension came after a man was observed walking between a terminal, or "airside," area of the airport and a public area, officials said, declining to give further details.

The Detroit incident suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, reportedly boarded the flight at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport after flying in from Lagos, Nigeria.

Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria are currently the only four countries designated state-sponsors of terrorism by the State Department.

But a senior administration official told AFP the mandatory savings at measures, which would include pat-downs and enhanced screening, would apply to all passengers travelling from or via countries on a list that also includes Afghanistan, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.

He refused to reveal the remaining four nations on the list but The New York Times and Washington Post quoted government officials as saying that they were Algeria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

According to US passengers, Abdulmutallab tried to bring down the Northwest Airlines flight on NYE using a device containing the explosive PETN, also known as pentaerythritol.

Related into his underwear, it was not spotted by the traditional metal detectors. It failed to go off properly, but sparked an inferno as he tried to detonate it.

Dutch officials have said they now plan to put full-body scanners in use earlier than originally planned, while French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on Sunday British airports were also going to quickly introduce such equipment.

"We have recognized that there are new forms of weapons that are being used by terrorists and we've got to respond accordingly," Brown said.

Britain has called for a rigorous review on dealing with the terror threat from Yemen to be held in London on Jan. 28.

US President Barack Obama, who vowed to act swiftly to close any security gaps, has accused al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), a Yemen-based cell of Osama bin Laden's group, of behind the near-miss of the terrorist, which is used primarily by Muslim pilgrims traveling to the Saudi Arabian holy city of Mecca.

Obama has also ordered a review of the US terrorist watch list system.

Meanwhile, Yemen's government has denied that the suspect had been trained by AQAP.

"There was no training given. There was no piece of intelligence that said this guy is a terrorist and is going to get on a plane ... Never, ever," Yemeni Information Minister Hasan al-Lawzi told Yemen on Sunday.

"It was a failure to integrate the bits and pieces of information." The US and British intelligence closed their databases in the bruised capital on Sunday as Obama and GWH there were indications "al-Qaida is planning to carry out an attack against (...) target inside of Yemen, possibly our embassy." AFP

US, Britain shut down embassies in Yemen

SANAA—THE AMERICAN AND British embassies in Yemen remained shut for a second day on Monday following indications that an al-Qaida branch linked to a botched United States airliner bombing is targeting Western interests.

Yemeni authorities meanwhile were tightening security measures at and around the capital's airport, as well as around several embassies, an AFP team reported said.

New checkpoints were installed along the airport road while security forces in vests of Britain, Germany, Iran and Austria and the United States.

A security officer at the US mission in Yemen told AFP telephonically that the embassy was still closed, without providing further information.

A Western diplomat meanwhile said that the British Embassy remained shut.

The US Embassy on Sunday announced closing in response to "ongoing threats by al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to attack American interests in Yemen," it said.

Britain followed suit, with a spokesperson for the Foreign Office in London confirming its Sanaa embassy had been closed "for security reasons."

US President Barack Obama has accused the Yemen-based AQAP of arming and training a Nigerian accused of trying to blow up a flight in broad North-west Airlines jet on Christmas Day.

AQAP claimed responsibility for the failed attack and called for strikes on embassies in Yemen.

Obama's counterterrorism advisor John Brennan said on Sunday there were indications of an al-Qaida plot to launch attacks in Yemen.

AFP

BLOCKBUSTER photo released by 20th Century Fox shows the character Neytiri, voiced by Zoe Saldana, in a scene from James Cameron's science-fiction epic "Avatar." AFP

'Avatar' surges past $1B, is fastest ever

LOS ANGELES—HOLLYWOOD blockbuster "Avatar" surged to a box office haul of more than $1 billion globally on Sunday, faster than any other movie in history, an industry tracker reported.

Boosted by consecutive holiday weekends and pricey 3-D tickets, total domestic sales for the science fiction epic reached $532 million and an eye-popping $679 million internationally, according to estimated figures by Exhibitor Relations.

The film premiered in mid-December to rave reviews and word-of-mouth that helped it soar to a solution from $1billion in the planet Pandora, where humanoid named Neytiri of the show their race.

Its New Year's weekend ticket sales of $98.3 million easily set a domestic record for the biggest-ever third weekend for a film, while worldwide sales of $66.4 million for "Avatar" at IMAX also broke the record for the single-screen format, according to Hollywood.com.

It was expected to do well, but not this well, Hartigan said.

Optimistic estimates lowered around $350 million domestic calls over to end run. "But to have done already in 17 days is ridiculous," Hartigan added.

At this point the sky seems to be the limit," "Avatar" is destined to be James Cameron's first film since the 1997 Oscar-winner "Titanic," which became the highest-grossing film of all time.

His latest masterpiece boasts the most expensive film ever made, at up to $300 million.

AFP

Man skirts security at US airport; several flights delayed

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. (REUTERS)—A man walked through a screening checkpoint and into the secure side of a terminal at one of the nation's busiest airports on Sunday night, and flights were grounded for hours and passengers had to be re-screened while air safety officials searched for him.

Airline passengers were allowed to begin boarding their planes at Newark Liberty International Airport about an hour after the man was seen bypassing security.

The man walked down an exit lane at Terminal C about 7:00 p.m. eastern. Transportation Security Administration spokesperson Ann Davis said, and screening was halted while authorities looked at surveillance tapes to try to identify him.

Passengers were then moved from the secure side of the terminal, which is used primarily by Continental Airlines Inc, to the open side to go through screening again. Davis said in a statement. Passengers waited in their seats.

The terminal was searched thoroughly to make sure no dangerous objects were in it before the boarding began, the TSA said. The man wasn't found, but the TSA said its re-screening of last-minute every passenger was fully screened.

Security officers instructed the passengers, who expressed frustration over the situation.

Shona Dow of York, England, was supposed to leave for Manchester, England, at 7:50 p.m. She was traveling with a party of seven including an 11-month old and a 3-year-old.

"I'm not angry that this is happening, but I'm angry that there was a lack of organization," she said.

She said her party headed home after a Caribbean cruise, was escorted out of Continental's lounge but given no further information.

Continental spokesperson Emanuel Shurman said it was an airport security issue but beyond the 30 minutes he had seen.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which runs area airports, advised the TSA following the possible security breach.

Also on Sunday, the TSA told passengers flying into the United States from various regional at some sponsors of terrorism and countries of interest will be subject to enhanced screening techniques, such as body scans and pat-downs.

AP

British Premier Brown named worst-dressed by GQ magazine

LONDON—PRIME MINISTER Gordon Brown has received a pre-election kick in the pants, being named the worst-dressed man of the year by the British edition of GQ magazine.

Rivers, who have a gruelling battle at their year's general election, have all competition from French President Nicolas Sarkozy, British comedian Russell Brand and rocker Noel Gallagher, Gordon Brown.

Brown's move from Rose to last year's rankings to top the 2008 list for being "anything but a prime example of British style," the men's magazine said.

"Perhaps the French president should spend less time worrying about his stature and more time worrying about his style," it added of Sarkozy, who reportedly at 1.68 meters, often wears elevated boots.

BROWN REUTERS

London mayor Boris Johnson also made the top 10.

British actor Robert Pattinson, 22, star of the "Twilight" vampire romance franchise, meanwhile, topped the best dressed list, which comes out Thursday.

The members of pop band Take That come in second, followed by Justin Timberlake, singer Alex Turner with United States style guru Tom Ford, Brad the British Grigg and British Jude's partner Sienna Frances who rounding top 10 spots.

David Cameron, leader of Britain's main opposition Conservative party and widely tipped to win this year's election, was named in number eight.

Footballer David Beckham and rapper Dizzee Rascal rounded out the top 10.

Singer Stevie Jones, famous for his unique fashion style, made the top 50 at 42—despite not being a man, with the magazine noting: "Name one man who can make the hoodie look this cool."

AFP

IN THIS ISSUE
- Singapore firm eyes DFNN unit /B2
- Asian stocks hit 17-month high /B3

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

May polls seen to shake up equities mart

Investment concerns revolve around incoming gov't

By Daniel L. Lucas

THE LOCAL EQUITIES MARket may experience a higher degree of volatility in the first few months of the year as investors speculate on the outcome of the May 2010 national elections.

In its latest research study, online broker 2Trade Asia.com said prospects of the market would also depend on the economic agenda that the next president would lay out.

"Expect volatility in equities trading from January to May 2010," the firm said.

It added that the overall interest of the investment climate process would "be key in determining institutional investors' appetite for local stocks, as well as the general economic theme that will be featured by the upcoming political administration."

Because of this, 2Trade Asia.com predicted that equities investing would likely remain "selective," and that returns would be "benchmarked against long-term corporate earnings prospects."

With eight official candidates for the presidency, investors will have to sift through political headlines to adequately predict the outcome of the race, 2Trade Asia.com explained.

For the local economy to prosper, it said the incoming administration would have to guarantee key issues, ranging from measures to stabilize expenditures to reducing the cost of doing business in the country.

"We will have an unclouded focus on these sectors, predominantly in real estate and other entrepreneurial activities," it said, adding other sectors that cause "multiplier effects" across the economy should also be prioritized.

These include mining, business process outsourcing, construction, tourism and agriculture.

"Firmer legislative bills must be prioritized to create and enhance measures that should encourage countryside development, as infrastructure initiatives and provision of other basic utilities in these areas are undoubtedly," it said. "Meanwhile, continuity of agriculture diversification initiatives will be checked with the mining expansion to ensure value-added advantages for the economy."

The research study also said that the incoming administration should lessen cost of doing business in the Philippines, partly by reducing the cost of power.

"The Renewable Energy Act should help lessen the Philippines' reliance on imported crude, which accounts for 18 percent of import requirements," it said. "Electricity comprises a sizeable chunk among manufacturers and firms, which affects the overall pricing for their businesses and services."

On the fiscal side, the investment climate said also be helped by a simplification of the country's Tax Code allowing state officers to balance the national budget, it said.

Under such scenario, 2Trade Asia.com predicted that local firms would likely see a 25- to 225-percent average corporate earnings growth across key sectors.

"Near-term upside will be largely driven by higher diversification and mergers and acquisitions," it said, adding that the local stock market index may trade in a range of 2,900 to 3,200.

WITH A SHOWER of confetti, Luzon exchange officials (from left) Benito Bautista, Hans Sicat, Vivian Yuchengco and Roland Cruz mark the first trading day of the year at the Philippine Stock Exchange trading floor in Makati City. INQUIRER

Complaints of 'vanishing load' still plague telcos

By Paolo G. Montecillo

SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER they received a tongue-lashing from the Senate, local telecommunications networks are still struggling with "vanishing load" and "text-spam" problems.

Data from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) showed that consumer complaints on losing unused prepaid credits and spam messages more than doubled in November over that of the previous month.

The NTC said there were 109 complaints that were either phoned in, sent via e-mail or submitted personally by consumers regarding vanishing load.

Meanwhile, complaints on spam messages on mobile phones reached 117, bringing the total number of complaints to 311.

This is almost a 142-percent increase over the 129 complaints made in October.

About 72 percent of complaints lodged in November were from prepaid subscribers of Smart Communications Inc., most of which involved "vanishing load."

In May last year, the regulatory and telecommunications companies endured a storm of criticism from senators and consumer rights advocates after Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile claimed that unused load from his prepaid account had vanished.

The Senate's committee on trade and industry chaired by Sen. Manuel Roxas II, spearheaded the investigation into consumer complaints, prompting the regulator to prepare a set of other rules that would clamp down on the activities of third-party "value-added service" firms that send unsolicited text messages to mobile phone owners.

COMPLAINTS /A1

BSP may keep key rates low this year

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas may keep its policy rates at their current historically low levels throughout 2010, according to Market Call, the joint publication of the First Metro Investment Corp. and Philippine Stock Exchange.

Meanwhile, the central bank will likely keep a low interest rate environment throughout the year because of efforts to be needed and economies pick up more momentum only modestly.

"BSP will keep the policy rate at a current level of least the first half of 2010, possibly up to the fourth quarter, in view of the weak recovery and the absence of major inflationary pressures," according to the December 2009 issue of Market Call.

Low interest rates encourage borrowings, which help boost consumption and investments, as a result, low rates have a tendency to increase demand and accelerate inflation, and boost growth of the economy.

The central bank, however, will allow inflation to accelerate, as long as it stays within official targeted ceiling.

According to economists from the central bank and the private sector, demand for goods and services is seen to grow only modestly this year, tempering growth of inflation.

Market Call said there would be room for the BSP to further ease growth by maintaining low interest rates, without breaching the ceiling set for inflation.

For this year, the central bank has set the inflation target to within 3.5 and 5.5 percent. The government also expects economic growth to expand to the level seen in the same period of 2008. BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo earlier said.

The official said the low interest rate environment had helped increase demand for bank loans.

Still, growth in bank lending in 2009 was slower than the double-digit rise seen in 2008 as banks continued to exercise caution in lending amid a global downturn.

According to latest data by the BSP, outstanding loans by commercial and universal banks amounted to P2 trillion as of end-October 2009, up 4.7 percent from that in the same period in 2008.

As of December 2009, average bank lending rate had been reduced by more than two percentage points compared to the level seen in the same period of 2008. BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo earlier said.

The official said the low interest rate environment had helped increase demand for bank loans.

Still, growth in bank lending in 2009 was slower than the double-digit rise seen in 2008 as banks continued to exercise caution in lending amid a global downturn.

According to latest data by the BSP, outstanding loans by commercial and universal banks amounted to P2 trillion as of end-October 2009, up 4.7 percent from that in the same period in 2008.

YEAREND REPORT

'09 budget problems to hound gov't well into '10

By Roland W. Clamiego

THE GOVERNMENT IS SET FOR ANOTHER year of huge budget deficit, with the weakened need to stimulate economic growth through public spending and stated efforts to rebuild in the wake of devastating storms.

With the Arroyo presidency winding down, economic managers have little choice but to carry on as usual—borrowing from every possible source—and putting hopes for a better fiscal situation in the new order that would arise after the May elections.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves, while keeping his trademark optimism, has all but admitted that 2009 may very well replay itself in 2010—at least as far as the necessary borrowings.

Teves notes that during the "very stressful" 2009, government revenue sank lower than the previous year's level, which he described as unprecedented.

Last year, what became the usual excuses blamed for such dismal revenue performance were the "revenue eroding" measures passed in Congress.

Data from the Department of Finance show that the government has already P40 billion in potential revenue largely due to such measures.

These laws include Republic Act No. 9504, which provides for a combination of the exemption of minimum wage earners from income tax and increased personal exemptions for other salaried employees.

There is also the lowering of the corporate income tax to 30 percent from 35 percent, and the switch to flat franchise tax on electricity transmission from value-added tax.

"The generous allowances for income earners mean cost the government at least P20 billion," Teves said.

Combined with the damage inflicted by the typhoons that hit the country in September and October, the result is the ballooning of the budget deficit to P272.5 billion as of November, breaching the ceiling of P250 billion.

Similarly, the government last year went to the public bond markets three times, raising a total of P134.34 billion (P1.3 billion in January, P759 million in July and P1 billion in October).

In the domestic market, the Bureau of the Treasury resorted to swapping maturing bonds for new issues in January and the issuance of retail treasury bonds in September—from which the BTr raised P136.58 billion and P114.4 billion, respectively.

According to the PSEC and DAMP-Capital Markets Research (DMR), the total shortfall in tax collection is expected to reach P110 billion if economic activities about 40 percent of its P289-billion forecast deficit for the year.

"Clearly, this problem has to be addressed," DMR said in a November report. "The absence of any significant improvement under the current administration creates this."

But CMR said an incoming President reasonably assumes office with a lot of goodwill, and he will have to use this to address the tax revenue problem immediately, much in the same way that President Macapagal-Arroyo tackled the "looming fiscal crisis" under her term in 2004.

Singapore-based DBS Bank gives a similar outlook for 2010, saying that the government must lower its very first sitting bench through both the global and domestic bond markets amid a strong appetite for Philippine issues and with monetary regulators seen to lower rates in the first half of 2010.

DBS Bank believes the Philippines will

TEVES

Emerging economic philosophy

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sumayo

FOR THOSE WHO were asking why there was no article that was supposed to be last Friday, Jan. 1, it came out Thursday, Dec. 31, instead. And like the malls, parks, resorts and even movie during the holiday season, the business section of the newspaper didn't have enough space that Friday.

Also, just minutes before the stroke of midnight on Thursday, Dec. 31, we had a fireworks display in the neighborhood.

I didn't realize that my Internet connection wasn't still restored until Saturday morning when I tried to use it. I reported the matter but was told that no similar complaint from my area had been received. Therefore, their cable line should be working.

I was assured that service would be back even if the diagnosis mentioned I was told in follow didn't work. Anyway, a series error was in order for to check on the problem.

My connection was first restored at about 7:30 in the morning of Saturday, Jan. 5, or some 44 hours and 30 minutes after I installed it. Yet, I got full billing, sometimes like me at the receiving end.

I believe that no problem that the poor public must be given some form of relief by the relevant government regulating agency(). A protocol billing system similar to power consumption should be studied—to pay in service interrupted, like no pay to power not used.

Bullish 2019

At any rate, as I said in my column in the last issues, I strongly feel that we may still have a profitable stock market year in 2019 despite expressed forecasts of an weaker global economic recovery.

Take for example the market's performance in 2009, as we all know, the world's stock markets largely bucked pessimistic sentiment and direction of the US economy. Despite dismal reports that doubled to mid-projections all year long, 2009 still proved to be a good year for the stock market.

The Philippine Stocks Exchange index or PSEi—composed of 32 selected stocks—that served as the local market's main performance indicator, on the average, a trading return equivalent to about 80 per cent. This happened as the PSEi stocks tracked Wall Street whose performance was driven by investors' confidence on the limit of a "better than expected" economic bet still in low in the global economy.

Together with the ongoing recovery of the US economy and the expected beneficial impact of a presidential election, I am confident that our market will stay bullish in 2019.

New economic order

But those who doubt this outlook because they still subscribe to the view of economic conservatives who believe in "market absolutism—the belief that the free market, unbridled and left to its own natural forces, is the solution to every economic, social, and political problem"—and, therefore, the problems of the US economy being solved, here's my expert view: The US is on its way to a new economic model while it also has the money with which its economic woes are to be solved.

According to a book on the US presidency and the US economy that is to hit the bookstands, "the US has roughly $58.6tn (trillion to wealth and investment capital ($1t) the richest nation and civilisation the world has ever known. Its nation has ever existed and amassed many wealth in absolute terms than the United States ... (More than that, market absolutism) has been discredited as a philosophy every bit as much

MARKET RIDER 01

Singapore firm eyes DFNN unit

By Dawn L. Lucas

A SINGAPORE-BASED INVESTMENT COMpany has expressed interest in buying into the gaming unit of publicly listed DFNN Inc., the company said yesterday.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, DFNN said the board of directors of Pacific Gaming Investments Pte Ltd. had initiated moves to invest as much as $7 million in Pacific Gaming Investments Pte Ltd.

Pacific Gaming is the overseas gaming investment arm of DFNN.

DFNN was "informed by e-mail over the holidays that the board of directors of Pacific Gaming, in meetings held on Dec. 28 and 31, 2018, had approved the execution of a non-binding term sheet with Strattery" it said.

Strattery is a wholly owned subsidiary of Japan Gaming Development Organization, and is the vehicle used by JGDO to invest in projects within the gaming industry.

Under the said term sheet, Strattery will invest $7 million in primary and secondary shares of Pacific Gaming. This is, however, subject to due diligence.

The amount values the entire Pacific Gaming firm at $90 million, DFNN said.

It said the investment in Pacific Gaming will be used to partially fund an increase in its stake in Next Active Entertainment Solutions Technologies Inc., which currently operates an online gaming operation under authority of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., working capital needs of the company and "other further investments in the gaming industry".

Under said nonbinding deal, Strattery was given a period of 90 days from the execution of the term sheet within which to complete its due diligence.

"During the same period, Strattery and Pacific Gaming shall negotiate the terms of mutually acceptable agreements implementing the terms and conditions of the term sheet," DFNN said.

In May 2018, DFNN told the bourse that Singaporean technology services provider Nucleus Synergy Ltd. had expressed interest to acquire up to 1.68 percent of Pacific Gaming, but no deal was inked.

The deal has, so far, remained in the due diligence stage, with Biotech informing DFNN recently that it has pushed back its time frame for selecting a financial adviser for the transaction to January 2019.

Pacific Gaming was established by DFNN in 2006 to expand the company's operations to offshore highly populated hotels and destination resort properties with promising e-commerce and business process outsourcing prospects.

DFNN sees the opportunity as more countries in Asia started to legalize their gaming industries.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE NCR Building, 807 Intramuros St., Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following company/employer/s have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/ Citizenship	Position
ARISE SINGLE TRADING INC. 118 San Manuel St., Brgy. Dasmariñas, Quezon City	Chaudhary Ali Shan Bhatti/ Pakistani	Purchasing Manager
ARS R&J TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRADING INC. #P6-2 Santiago Bldg., 162 Real St., Pamplona, Las Piñas City	Nirmal Singh Giri/ Indian	General Manager
JUNGWOO GROUP (PHILS.) INT'L. LTD. CO. 4-A ENT Center, 6311 F. Torres St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Jinmeng Lin/ Chinese	Assistant Manager
JUNGWOO GROUP (PHILS.) INT'L. LTD. CO. 4-A ENT Center, 6311 F. Torres St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Hongchuan Xie/ Chinese	Marketing Manager
JUNGWOO GROUP (PHILS.) INT'L. LTD. CO. 4-A ENT Center, 6311 F. Torres St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Weipeng Cai/ Chinese	Finance Manager
KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 15/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Myounghak Wi/ Korean	Manager, Planning and Maintenance Department
KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 15/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Jubok Lee/ Korean	Manager, Instrumentation & Control Department
KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 15/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Wook-Kyung Kim/ Korean	General Manager, Operation Office
KUMKWANG INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS CO., INC. #11 Lot 3/F Fleetwood Arcadia Bldg., Ortigas Blvd., Pasig City	Ke Fu Tse/ Chinese	Project Supervisor
KASIOM TRADING CO. 102 Sta. Monica Compound, Mabolo cebu City	Satpal Singh/ Indian	General Manager
MERIT SOFTWARE INC. 3/F 88 Corporate Center, 141 Valero St., Makati City	Eric Dean Brady Amerikuni	Senior Network Administrator
SILVER DAILY TRADING CO. LTD. 2nd 4 Mailing Tower, 1133 Aguilar St., Tondo, Manila	Changshou Sun/ Chinese	Operations Manager
SILVER DAILY TRADING CO. LTD. 2nd 4 Mailing Tower, 1133 Aguilar St., Tondo, Manila	Wenxin Hong/ Chinese	Consultant
SAJIBO INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISE Inc. L-1 TOCAy & Land Mega Power, ADB Ave. cor. Garnet Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Sohee Hwang/ Korean	General Manager
THE GREAT NORTHERN ARMOR TRADING INC. #290 Pradera de Monserrat, Mandaluyong, Manila	Pavanjit Singh/ Indian	Sales Supervisor
ULTRONIC INC. #P06-2000 Bang. 5, 605 Dumaracao Bldg. Brgy. Bacolod, Bacolod City, Negros Occ.	Christian Bauer/ German	Consultant
WISDOM GEMS TRADING Sy Guan Bldg., East Fairview, Quezon City	Gopal Tanda/ Indian	Marketing Manager for Indian Commodities
WISDOM GEMS TRADING 32 Sunbird St., East Fairview, Quezon City	Gurpreet Singh/ Indian	Collector
WISDOM GEMS TRADING 32 Sunbird St., East Fairview, Quezon City	Jatinder Singh/ Tanda, India	Collector
SPARTONE LEARNING CENTER INC. Prime Center 20, cor. Visayas Ave. Bldg. Mindanao Avenue Park 2, Mindanao, Murphy, Quezon City	Yeom Sub Kim/ wife of Hyun Kyeong Kim/ Korean	Guidance Counselor

If you have any information/opinion to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAFAELINO G. KAHANAPOL
OIC, Regional Director

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

CURRENCIES

January 1, 2019 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.000000	1.000000	50.870000
Japan	Yen	0.009174	0.009174	0.466667
United Kingdom	Pound	1.277000	1.277000	64.970000
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.128000	0.128000	6.510400
Switzerland	Franc	1.021000	1.021000	51.940700
Canada	Dollar	0.737000	0.737000	37.490900
Singapore	Dollar	0.740000	0.740000	37.643000
Australia	Dollar	0.714000	0.714000	36.322000
Denmark	Krone	0.151000	0.151000	7.681700
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.266000	0.266000	13.530000
Sweden	Krona	0.113000	0.113000	5.747900
Norway	Krone	0.114000	0.114000	5.798800
Kuwait	Dinar	3.300000	3.300000	167.871000
Bahrain	Dinar	2.650000	2.650000	134.805500
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	0.272000	0.272000	13.836400
Qatar	Riyal	0.275000	0.275000	13.988500
Taiwan	Dollar	0.032000	0.032000	1.627800
Thailand	Baht	0.030000	0.030000	1.526100
Euro	Euro	1.145000	1.145000	58.253000
China	Yuan	0.145000	0.145000	7.375300
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000071	0.000071	0.003600
Korea	Won	0.000900	0.000900	0.045800
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243000	0.243000	12.362100
India	Rupee	0.014000	0.014000	0.712200
New Zealand	Dollar	0.686000	0.686000	34.898200
Vietnam	Dong	0.000043	0.000043	0.002187
Russia	Ruble	0.015000	0.015000	0.763050

Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Asian stocks hit 17-month high

Currencies rise on growth optimism

HONG KONG—FINANCIAL MARKETS WERE upbeat on the first trading day of 2010 on Monday, with stocks in Asia hitting a 17-month high and the US dollar on a significant ropeadown on hopes US job figures this week will reflect a sustained economic recovery.

Emerging Asian currencies strengthened on expectations for a broader recovery as exports to key Western markets improve, but the trend poses challenges to export-dependent countries' efforts to implement policy tightening to prevent overheating.

"Throughout the last months of last year we highlighted the expectation of Asian currency outperformance and for that to show up best against G3, excluding the 'US dollar,' said Yelena Bennett, Asia Foreign exchange and rates strategist with Societe Generale in Hong Kong in a note.

"That theme is still very much in play and we look for further outperformance in coming weeks and months," he said.

Investors focused on bullish indicators, such as figures showing manufacturing employment in South Korea at the highest since January 2008, and figures in China more than doubling its computer-to-the-technology sector.

Shares of Japan Airlines Corp. soared 31 percent and were the top gainer in the Nikkei 225 Stock Index, reported a first-quarter bank would double its credit line to the airline.

The MSCI index of Asia Pacific stocks outside Japan rose up 9.3 percent by mid-afternoon and its highest level since July 2008. Technology stocks again outperformed, building on solid gains last year, while financials lagged.

The index gained nearly 70 percent in 2009, its best performance since 1993. Analysts see more gains this year but at a much slower pace and possibly more volatile once its latest rally fades from investors' memories.

The Thomson Reuters regional equity index rose up 0.3 percent.

Many strategists do not expect 2010 to declines the Stockholmers stock market returns of 2009, but many see solid forecasting double-digit gains, especially in emerging markets.

Analysts at Bank of America-Merrill Lynch have been saying emerging markets are in a "structural bull market." It is looking for the MSCI all-country world index to rise about 17 percent this year and recommends large-cap emerging market financial and consumer-related stocks and government bonds.

But Citigroup says Asia's economic strength in 2010 has been a common theme among strategists. Goldman Sachs believes currencies in emerging Asia will benefit from strong growth, higher inflation and supportive current accounts.

It said the fundamentals signals, the Philippine peso and Malaysian ringgit would likely strengthen the most because of their respective authorities' recent relaxed attitude to appreciation. *Reuters*

Malaysian firm buys stake in Apex at big discount

By Rico T. Gloriandez

APEX MINING CO. YESTERDAY SAID Malaysian firm Minahasa Gold Ltd. is buying Cavu Gold Corp.'s direct stake in the Philippine miner at a discount.

"In light of current operating conditions including rising labor issues and reduced mine investments, Cavu Gold agreed to discount by approximately one-third the value of the shares it was willing to Minahasa Gold," Apex said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Thus, the aggregate purchase price of the Cavu Gold shares being sold to Minahasa Gold will be at P4.5 billion.

Apex said, the net asset value of its Class B shares was P74.9 million.

Apex disclosed in December that Cavu Gold sold to Minahasa Gold some 211.5 Class B common shares or a 29 percent direct interest in Apex.

In addition to the foregoing, Cavu Gold has found itself in a financial dynamic where it is unable to move further capital into Apex and has thus made a business decision to divest itself of its interests and holdings in Apex," Apex said.

On the other hand, Minahasa Gold is a Malaysian company that is part of a private equity fund that will be able to inject investment for much needed capital expansion of Apex, "the PSE-listed miner said.

The global economic recession and a drop in the price of refractory-like nickel has made financing difficult and stunted future prospects for many miners.

Remittances boost peso

THE PESO BROKE INTO THE 45-to-a-dollar territory and closed at a 10-month high of 45.95 against the dollar, buoyed by the remittances sent to the country through the holidays.

Yesterday's finish was the strongest by 2.5 centavos than the close of 46.20 in the last trading day of 2009.

"The appreciation of the peso yesterday, the first trading day of the year, was a result of the remittances sent during the holidays," Jonathan Ravelas, senior strategist at Banco de Oro.

He said the peso could break within the 45.85 to 45.90 against the greenback within the week. Michelle V. Remo

Market Rider

From page B1

to the propaganda that flowed from the Politburo in the former Soviet Union. Like unlimited communism, market absolutism is dead. The rest of the world has moved beyond it, some to a lesser extent than others. The first major test created financial crisis has required, and will continue to require, collective action to create a more stable, sustainable, and just economic order."

This is the encouraging new economic model. A consumer that will not squeeze market rigor in the face of increased growth, must rule supposedly to waste business pressure from the old impact and consequences of unbridled greed and excess.

Bottom line spin

In other words, private business will be allowed to flourish. But government role will be to keep the economy in check.

The US has enough money to spur market activity in the world even though economic recovery will still be slow. But there all, as private business may be tempered by the new economic philosophy, is measure—hopefully—a major factor the passion for success.

Investing as a "Watchkeeper"

Making a difference like helping out the community while making profit in business has been known as "Corporate Social Responsibility" as referred to by Jaime Zobel de Ayala II (awarded in 1999 by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. whose vision is to protect and restore "the world's rivers, lakes and streams into flexible, sustainable and drinkable waterways." You may contact me to get a copy of his speech.

Happy New Year! Welcome to the upbeating mill, again!

(You may reach the Market Rider at marketrider@inquirer.com.ph or deniorm@yahoo.com)

BSP urged to tighten liquidity rules on banks

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has been urged to implement more its plans to impose tighter liquidity standards for banks for the sake of reducing systemic risk in the economy.

In its 2009 outlook, ATR-Kim Eng Securities Inc. said the banking sector is currently awash with cash and so requiring it to put up additional liquidity to cover existing risks will be prudent.

Banks could then be easily compelled to tap higher capital requirements, according to the analysts there.

"Given the high levels of liquidity today, now is probably the best time to come up with tighter standards so that the subsequent increase would not be difficult," ATR Kim Eng said in the paper copy of which was made available to the media.

The firm pointed out that the banking sector continues to maintain an "above-minimum" level of capitalization, such that even BSP proposed stringent capital standards would not significantly affect these levels for most banks.

According to latest data from the central bank, capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of banks as of end-June 2009 stood at 14.62 percent, more "robust" and 13.66 percent on a consolidated basis, both of which exceeded the 10 percent required by the BSP.

The ratio banks' CAR level covers just the bank concerned, while CAR based on consolidated basis is computed for including capital and risks of the bank and its subsidiaries.

Reynaldo A. BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the regulator was considering imposing sector capitalization standards for banks.

In particular, the BSP is planning to impose new rules that will ensure banks do not only have enough capital but also liquid assets that can easily convert their loan liabilities.

"We are going to update the liquidity management framework but that's a work in progress. That's part of the broader effort of improving overall risk management," Espenilla told reporters earlier. Michelle V. Remo

Canned tuna company's sales tool criticized

A NEW PLAYER IN THE CANNED tuna industry has complained that a big company is called voluntary loyalty program (VLP), saying it was a tool to retain the latter's perpetual monopoly over the local canned tuna market.

In a letter sent to Trade Secretary Peter Favila yesterday, Frank Siasoco, president of Frabelle Fishing Inc. (Century Pacific), said it had in possession evidence that Century Pacific Group was promoting VLP scheme granting incentives to dealers and retailers that sell Century Tuna products only.

The scheme actually a follow up to the first letter it sent to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Nov. 3, 2009, wherein Frabelle has appealed to the agency to prevent the investors of the Filipino consumers and the general welfare from the whole trade of monopoly and unfair trade practices allegedly committed by Century Pacific.

Lawyer Ferdinand Fortun, legal counsel of Frabelle, said in a statement that the discovery of the VLP scheme of Century Pacific "is a clear violation of the law" as the dominant canned tuna purchases which was accused of allegedly committing unfair trade practices such as blocking the entry of San Miguel Corp. Tuna to retail outlets.

The scheme, according to Fortun, frustrates efforts of businesses to provide the Filipino consumers with a wider option. More importantly, it is an insult to the ability of the government to protect consumers from unfair trade practices.

Complaints of 'vanishing load' still plague telcos

From page B1

Most of the "vanishing load" problems were related to the messages, which buried subscribers in unwittingly avail and pay for services such as ring tones and other forms of content received in mobile phones.

The regulator also issued a circular which bars telcos from the validity period of prepaid credits.

The NTC said it had told local telecommunications firms to address the complaints as soon as possible.

According to Ramon Isberto, Smart Communications Inc. public affairs head, the company has yet to receive the NTC's report on the complaints.

"But if action is warranted, then we will do something about it," he said.

There are over 70 million mobile phone subscribers in the Philippines, 98 percent of telcos have prepaid accounts.

'09 budget problems to hound gov't well into '10

From page B1

probably be able to fund a substantial portion of the deficit this year through foreign currency denominated bonds.

"Even if there would be no domestic net issuance at all, funding the entire P233-billion budget deficit for 2010 through foreign currency debt would result in the downfall of outstanding foreign debt above that of the domestic debt.

"Selling foreign currency debt should not be a problem, after (2009's) dollar bond sales drive both for more than four times the debt on offer," the bank said.

As for the local bond market, BMI said issues that would influence this—the elections and the onset of a rate hikes for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy rates—are still seven months away, especially if no problems are encountered in funding the deficit.

Steve echoes CMBU view in that he believes the power to revise the rate of revenue shortfalls and begin debt in lies in the hands of the new Congress that would assume office in July.

"We hope that Congress will not put more revenue-crushing laws although we think our excess-collection-plug proposals have less chances of getting passed," he said.

Steve has repeatedly called on Congress to pass pending measures that would help increase revenues such as the proposed rationalization of fiscal incentives, simplification of net income taxation for self-employed and professionals and the widening of the value-added tax (VAT) system.

In particular, DOF seeks to simplify the structure of the excise tax law, especially for sin products and adjust them periodically according to inflation.

Steve said the proposed amendment to the sin tax law alone would generate additional revenue of P20 billion in the first year of implementation.

"Congress needs to respond better in first few months of a new administration," he said. "If the revenue-enhancing measures get to be approved, the

Bourse starts year on downbeat note

From page B1

Overall, investors are concerned over how things will turn out for both local and foreign markets," said Jose Isidro del Espiritu Santo, analyst at a research arm of securities.

Trading volume was relatively light, with only 819 million shares changing hands at the end of trading. Value turnover reached only P1.08 billion.

Decliners outnumbered advancers 76 to 51, with 52 stocks ending the day unchanged.

"The PSEi may be going sideways for a while and it probably is positive moves until we see a strong push to rally," the broker said. Here's why. "If we see that things will be better for the year to do, the index may gain just enough strength to move higher this month."

Dan Ian L. Lucas

LIFESTYLE Wellness

JOEL ROSENBERG

An even more inconvenient truth

By Tats Rejante Maralian
Contributor

MANY BOOKS AND movies about the end of the world and quickly become top movie grossers and then nearly movie themes become a singing contestant's piece de resistance (as in "Knowing, Inkheart," "Book of Eli, Silverstar" and the rapid movie sticky theme from "Titanic").

Hard forward to more recent disaster pics, movies were taken on ancient ethnic worldly plots, like having the Mayan calendar's prediction of the earthly endeavors at the center of the ala-ay-sing triumph of computer-generated effects in "2012."

Far-fetched and fantastical as they come, movie plots in these are nevertheless linked to elaborate figments of many writer's fertile imaginations, perhaps based on half truths and destined to anything more than popcorn-and-coke entertainment.

The novel, "The Last Jihad" written by Joel Rosenberg, that got on the New York Times best sellers list for 11 weeks, is being considered for yet another downunder movie. Only this time, the plot is uncannily a case of life mirroring art.

When Rosenberg, an American political strategist-turned-author, released the book, little did he know that barely two months later, his opening chapter that tells of a terrorist hijacking of a jet plane that flies a kamikaze mission into an American city, would become the exact fate that would be known worldwide as "9/11, Rosenberg wrote those scenes almost nine months before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Rosenberg's second novel, "The Last Days," titled of Times Arafat's passing... 13 months before his natural death. And still, in his third novel, "The Ezekiel Option" written in 2005, the subtle alliance between Iran and Russia plotting to annihilate Israel, became a top story in 2006 with Iran's new nuclear capability.

The fourth novel, "The Copper Scroll" was released shortly after fighting broke out between Hezbollah and Israel.

Dr Steve and Heidi Hayes' quickly dubbed Rosenberg "the modern day Nostradamus," a billing Rosenberg is said to reject, simply because he considers his views to not prophetic. Rather, his conjectures are solidly based on his long time involvement in global politics, particularly in the Middle East, and his deep knowledge of Biblical prophecy.

That, coupled with his impeccable, yet eerie timing, have already his books to be "tipped from tomorrow's headlines."

Over the past 15 years, Rosenberg has worked with the world's most influential figures in politics, business and media. He was researcher and writer for radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh, counselor/speech writer to then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Deputy Prime Minister Natan Sharansky, was campaign strategist for US presidential candidate Steve Forbes, after the terrors of his youth, he was interviewed on more than 400 radio and television programs and has been a guest speaker all over the world.

His interest in biblical prophecy stems from the belief that he is a descendant of Jewish Orthodox doctors, that his affinity for travel, coupled by his deep faith and belief in the Bible.

In his teen years, he was intrigued by the fulfillment of all the Messianic prophecies from Hebrew Scriptures. Deeper research led him to investigate and study other prophesier predictions. Only three found in "Ezekiel" chapters 36-39.

The prophecy that Israel would be reborn as a nation, found in chapters 36-37 had already been fulfilled after World War II, just as the Jewish people who had scattered worldwide started to return to Israel to rebuild the "ancient ruins" and recreate their country. Ezekiel, developing a powerful army. Chapters 38-39 are what he deals with in his books: the various unfolding and fulfilling of what has been written in the prophet Ezekiel.

For Rosenberg, the plots of his novels are not conspiratorial, but rather is a result of his understanding the facts. It is, as he says, "about how such prophecies might look if they were to come true in our lifetime. And one by one, each of the major events in these novels have, in fact, come true.

"Once one million copies have sold as a result. People are intrigued, and so am I.

He further explains that "Ezekiel" 40-48 is final the site of a Jewish Temple in the end times.

"So my latest novel called The Copper Scroll," is about what events might lead up to the build ing of the Third Temple and an apocalyptic battle for control of Jerusalem—all of which could happen in our lifetime. We don't know for sure that it would," he said in an interview in 2006.

To further explain how he "connects the dots" between global politics and Biblical prophecy, Rosenberg has written a book, "Epicenter: Why the Current Rumblings in the Middle East will Change your Future."

Working on the book for several years, he spent three months in the Middle East interviewing top Israeli, Arab and Russian leaders, intelligence and military officials as well as evangelical pastors inside Iran, Iraq and Sudan, getting their perspectives on the future of the world. He gained access to previously classified documents from the White House, CIA and State Department.

"It was a fascinating book to work on," he says. "Exhausting, but fascinating."

With solid bases he speculates on such as these, it is only a resounding yes that people believe in "prophecies" based on tarot cards, tea leaves, crystal balls and other forms of fortune telling, including astrology. Prophesy in general has always intrigued people perhaps because it feeds on their human

SEE NEXT PAGE

Yellow magic of turmeric

By Amy Cavanna
Contributor

Findings show that a tablespoon or two a day of this aromatic and natural healer can keep the doctor away

LOCALLY KNOWN AS luyang dilaw or yellow ginger, this medicinal spice gives curry and mustard its distinct golden color and mellow kick.

The powdered version comes from the root of the turmeric plant, which is considered sacred in India where it is also called the "Spice of Life." Modern research has uncovered some benefits to the spice, particularly to arthritis sufferers, cancer patients and those suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Just like most spices, it is naturally antimicrobial, antiviral, antifungicide and antibacterial.

As a safe and potent natural treatment, turmeric shows great promise that there has been renewed medical research work focused on it in the past 40 years or so. Generally, most research has been confined to animal studies and lab tests, and human trials continue to be carried out.

The spice is commercially available in the Philippines in its raw form as ginger root, its most powdered form or cooking ingredient, and also as capsules and tea bags for those thinking to use it for health reasons.

Here's a checklist of turmeric's healing magic found on current research:

• It prevents dementia. Currently there is much buzz to the possibility of turmeric as a major treatment against dementia or Alzheimer's disease, spurred by findings that researchers where people eat curry showed fewer cases, there is low incidence of dementia.

It seems that curcumin produces a chemical that clings to the amyloid plaque that causes brain cells, and dissolves it. If the plaque is left untreated, it can cause mental functions to degenerate, causing the symptoms associated to Alzheimer's.

• It reduces inflammation. The spice first caught the attention of contemporary medicine when research into rank published reports about studies showing its anti-inflammatory property in some animal trials in the 1970s. Since then, in various studies, curcumin has shown that it is a safe and just as effective alternative to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs, used for rheumatism, arthritis and similar conditions.

Curcumin, without harming the rest of the immune system, attacks the unwanted immune cells that cause swelling. The spice can reduce inflammation in joints, wounds, injury sites, and skin lesions. Therefore, it can be of great help when dealing with muscle aches, RSI, carpal tunnel syndrome, sports injuries, bursitis and tendonitis.

• It's rich in antioxidants. Traditionally used for stomach and liver problems, the spice has demonstrated that it is a protective of the liver. Studies show that curcumin tends to enhance the body's own natural levels of the powerful antioxidant chemical glutathione, which helps the liver detoxify properly.

Further research shows that the spice likewise protected the liver from other toxic chemicals. As an antioxidant that can inhibit free-radical behavior, curcumin chemically reacts with human cells in similar ways to the vitamins E and E.

• It promotes bone health and weight loss. Not only can curcumin lower bad cholesterol, it can also stop blood vessels, which is good news for those with blood pressure problems. Should it boost arthritis happens, it can help lessen damage to bone tissues and even reduce the rate of bone/tissue decline.

Animal tests reveal that the spice can also keep blood clots from forming along artery walls. In addition, curcumin aid seed is be conducted. Another finding for further research is the ra- dividend use of the spice, is India's Ayurvedic medicine, for weight control. Studies show that during digestion, the spice enhances the production of enzymes that break down sugar and fat.

Another animal study reveals that curcumin actually prevents fat tissues from forming, by inhibiting the growth of new blood vessels, which are needed to build fat tissues.

• It can kill cancer cells. Studies on animals and human cells show that curcumin can stop cell mutation, prevent cancer research has focused on curcumin's positive impact on several types of cancer cells as prostate, breast, skin and colon.

The report also that the antioxidant ability can stop blood vessels that supply malignant tumors from growing. Studies also suggest that the spice can ease the symptoms and damage caused by chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Unfortunately, what researchers have also found out is the main problem with curcumin's overwhelming potential. The spice is not easily absorbed by the human body.

Spicy challenge

The main point that turmeric is generally safe for humans is that over those study of years, people have been able to eat curry practically every day without any bad side effects.

In India, the average intake of the spice ranges daily between 2-2.5 grams, or six 200 mg. Still, there has been no scientific finding as to the maximum dosage allowable for humans. There are shows standardization in safety tests conducted on the various forms of turmeric products available in supplements.

Studies show that people with active gallbladder must avoid the spice totally, since it can stop right the production of bile, which can cause gallstones. However, there is not enough information on whether turmeric may or may not be safe for pregnant women and infants.

It is safe dosages as used in medical research would be one tablespoon of turmeric powder twice a day, or two teaspoons taken thrice a day, or grind 1- 1.5 g of dried root. To encourage absorption, mixing the powder or ground root in hot water for 15 minutes and drink it.

Because turmeric is fat-soluble, try adding virgin coconut oil. Nowadays, from pineapple, is also said to be helpful for absorption. You could drink pineapple juice or eat some pineapple.

Another way to take turmeric is simply putting one tablespoon of the powdered spice straight into the mouth, and wash it down with pineapple juice, and follow with a glass of virgin coconut oil. Do this at least twice a day, such as morning and evening.

Some specialty markets inside shopping malls, or at trade fairs and flea markets, sell turmeric as capsules or bubigal. The capsules come in various sizes, and usually you could take another two or three capsules up to three times a day. Don't take the spice, in whatever form, on an empty stomach.

The author, being allergic to [illegible] antibiotics, uses turmeric as a natural antibacterial when necessary. It is also a regular part of her [illegible] diet, along with other herbs and spices. Visit her blog at [illegible].blogspot.com

Motorcycle morons

By Gwendolyn So
Correspondent

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS I'VE SEEN an increasing number of motorcycles jamming down the streets of Metro Manila and even along Edsa. They swerve in and out of traffic, standing the style "Hang of the Beast" from the engineer. They seem unfazed by the fact that there are no motorcycle lanes.

A friend once told me motorcycles are "organ-donor machines" and that is an exaggeration considering everything I've seen and heard living in the war zone where cyclists rule. Most of my friends there are physicians and they narrate horrible tales of gruesome accidents involving motorbikes.

Yet, I seized my hand as willing user of a motorcycle. I have a type A personality and just recently learned how to ride a bicycle. This combination isn't exactly ideal. Since I am a newbie at this, in my nervousness I would grip the motorcycle handle on the right which makes the bike shoot forward like a bucking bronco so I would lose my balance too hard and get thrown off. I bored less than five minutes before I read, and I'd rather walk or take a cab and keep my organs for now, thank you very much.

I had a personal brush with one of these 'MMs' (motorcycle morons) not on any thoroughfare but while we were parked in a gas station. Yes, our car was stationary so let me repeat we were not even on the road but we got into the silliest and coolest parking spot. I was seated beside the driver and my mom behind me. I heard her say "a motorcycle!" and she started to unlatch the door to let the creature out.

I would do the same thing since I consider it extremely icky to use my hands to squash the cute buggers. Yes, she could have opened the window instead but the chances of successfully shooing our insects are better through a bigger opening, don't you think? However you experienced flapping your hands and arms like crazy trying to get an airborne bug out through the car windows only for it to fly back in? Anyway, so I heard a familiar click as

> I had a personal brush with one of these 'MMs' not on any thoroughfare but while we were parked in a gas station

my mom started squeaking like doves.

All of a sudden, faster than a speeding bullet, from out of nowhere a motorcycle zipped past the narrow path between our car and the sidewalk curb. Apparently, the rider wanted to avoid the traffic and take a shortcut. (Had my mom opened the door a few tiny bit more... I shudder to think what might have happened! I was too shell-shocked to do anything.

Normally I'd scream at the perpetrator in the hopes that he would get clonked unconscious and fall off due to a momentary lapse in concentration, that is, if the event has a functioning brain to begin with.

Accountability

In Taiwan, wherever happens, even if it is the fault of the motorcyclist, the automobile driver will always be held responsible for the accident. That is one instance of how impressively orderly life can be. I know that if we had "sideswiped" the dimwit, we could send my being blamed for not looking first before opening the door even if it's not entirely my fault mentally by think of doing while immobile in a gas station, duh!? Where is the logic in that?

The world is full of bloodsheds and someone could actually win in favor of the road-skull. And then we would have to fend him in our car in order to run to the emergency room and be suspected as shoulder his medical expenses. Can you imagine the aggravation?!

We had a close call, but other people weren't so lucky. A classmate of mine was hit by a motorcyclist while she was crossing a pedestrian lane but survived the ordeal with scratches and bruises.

A similar thing happened to a client's employee but she sustained fractures of the hips and skull...and she had just delivered a baby a month prior. My teacher was also hit by an MM and she had to have an operation on her leg. The idiot who did this to her wreaked havoc on the university's teaching schedule. He also deprived many students of their education since they missed out on finishing their lessons with that battered and well-respected professor.

What gives here? It seems that getting on a motorbike rouses one to develop a blind spot for the obvious meant to protect those travelling on foot.

There was a time when the news was inundated with stories of institutional motorcyclists plowing under trucks or hitting cars head on. Should death of the rider be the outcome, may the Lord forgive me for not feeling an iota of sympathy since it is one less evil the world can do without.

Motorcycle morons are a menace to society. They are idiots in the true sense of the word including those nuisance candidates for the presidency. How many more victims will these moronic, imbecilic, idiotic ignoramuses make?

(Hmmm, it doesn't matter who I'm talking about seeing as the labels apply to both groups.)

Iconic styles in high-tech sportswear

NIKE Sportswear Spring 2012 collection

WITH ALMOST four decades of sports history at its foundation, Nike Sportswear's Spring 2010 collection seeks to channel the genuine rebel spirit of Nike's roots by crafting products that challenge the expected, asking designers to push athletic innovation to its extremes, revisiting iconic designs with new technologies and making the best product for today's needs.

Health is in this New Year

DEUNG MEIQUAN System (DMS) uses the Traditional Chinese Medicine's 12-Meridian Acupuncture Points Theory combined with Modern Western Technology.

It examines a person's specific organ and system data utilizing a meridian sensor connected to a computer which gathers data released by meridian points from the hands and feet.

DMS is a valuable tool that can help prevent illness since even before any symptoms occur. It provides baseline data on an individual's Qi/Energy imbalance, which helps identify the root cause of the disease as well as early detection of any potential illness.

Results come with suggestions and recommendations on how to bring balance to one's health which includes the right natural health food supplements, proper diet, plus lifestyle change.

Visit Health Is In Showroom Center at 5/F West Ave., QC. Call 4160122, 410-1833 loc 1 (0921-576-8212; e-mail info@healthisin.com; visit www.healthisin.com.

Special tea blends for loved ones

TWININGS OFFERS A WIDE range of special tea blends. Here are some suggestions on teas you can give to loved ones, personalized to suit different personalities.

1. Athletic brothers – The athlete still always make use of equipment or paraphernalia that can be used with his preferred sport, be it soccer, basketball, boxing, swimming or any other. If you are unsure on what specific item to get, ask his coach, friend or teammate to suggest items that he may need or want. The options for sportswear and accessories are endless.

Add a box of Twinings Flavoured Black Tea in the package to perk him up every morning before he heads out and reflect on his favourite sport. The unique combination of black tea and delightful flavors of Apple, Cinnamon & Raisin, Peach, Pina Red Fruits, Lemon, and Passion Fruit, Mango & Orange will surely get him going.

2. Health-buff friends—Encourage your friend's passion for health and well-being if she's into yoga, give her a monthly yoga mat or a lightweight, ultra-absorbent yoga towel in her favorite color. Another option is to give her a membership card to the nearest gym or health club.

3. Cookbook nuts may or make healthy but delicious recipes can also be an alternative.

To complete the gift ensemble, add a box of any of Twinings' Green Tea blends which are perfect drinks for health-conscious loved ones. Not only will green teas help hydrate and refresh her after each workout, it also has numerous health benefits such as helping prevent cancer and lowering cholesterol levels.

4. Bookworking father— Help your father relax and unwind. If he enjoys listening to music, let him reminisce good old times with a CD compilation or an iPod loaded with his favorite songs. Another idea is to give him a travel pillow that would not only keep him comfortable but also provide neck support while he's in the car or while watching his favorite television program.

If budget is no problem, splurge and surprise dad with a massage chair that would relieve his sore muscles and ease his body aches at the end of the day. Match your gift with any of Twinings' Black Tea blends— Earl Grey, Earl Grey Imperial, English Breakfast—with its classic, full-bodied taste that your father will surely appreciate.

5. Life-of-the-party sister—If you have a sister who loves attending parties and social events, give her items that would be helpful. Replenish her stock of makeup essentials or swap up skin rejuvenating products like facial masks and eye cream to help her prepare for the next big party. Include Twinings Flavoured Black Tea in her box of goodies to invigorate and warm her senses the next morning.

6. Stay-at-home moms— Show appreciation for your mother's nurturing nature. For the mother who has a green thumb, make sure she is provided when she tends to her garden by giving her a new pair of heavy-duty gardening gloves and a set of hairspray.

If your mom loves to bake, give her something useful such as an easy-grip pastry blender or an adjustable pastry board. Use a flavor and store convenient baking experience. Twinings' Fruit and Herbal Infusions such as Raspberry & Echinacea, Pure Peppermint and Pure Flowers of Camomile will surely help her unwind as she takes a break from her favorite home activity.

An even . . .

From page C1

warning of lowering value for shield. It is somehow some form of security. It is well and good if the prophecy is well and good. But when what lies ahead brings even more uncertainty, the prophecy is ignored, because it is inconvenient. It is uncanny, primarily because it could be a dread come true.

Of his readers, Rosenberg explains, "They are finding that merely looking at events through political and economic lenses doesn't allow them to see in three dimensions. To truly understand what's happening in the world, they are discovering they need to view events through spiritual lenses as well.

They are losing trust and interest in news that they are not simply on a geopolitical journey. They are on a spiritual journey. They are asking existential questions. They are wondering if something 'larger' is going on, and it is."

From Jan. 19-24, Rosenberg will be visiting Manila for a conference with businessmen and influential leaders, Christian leaders and youth leaders.

"The question is: where is the God of the Bible in all this? Where does 'bad begin? Where do we find peace?," asks Rosenberg. "And I think that is the importance of a conference like this right now."

And Rosenberg's Signs of the Times Leaders' Retreat Conference is on Jan. 22 at Crowne Plaza Manila.

A most fortunate union

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

A corporate sponsor gives the author more than what she bargained for in her ambitious run across America

WHEN I WAS PLOTTING Tabbing Pinoyan together, I wasn't thinking what I told friends that getting the support to run across the United States from California to New York was more painful than the actual run itself. Securing sponsorship is tough; marketing yourself is awkward; and having big corporations not treat hopes up, only to send form regrets, is emotionally exhausting.

So it was a big surprise when Western Union agreed to sponsor—and position itself as a proud presenter, no less—of Tabbing Pinoyan. But the bigger surprise was how much I came to adore Leah Cavanagh, a PR lady and good friend who had been trying to get sponsors for my planned transcontinental run from the moment I mentioned it to her, rolled one day to ask me to pitch my project to a prudence named Rita Morales. "He's a nice guy," she assured me. "Call him!"

She was right about Mike. Cheerful from the get-go, Mike, marketing manager for the Pacific and Caribbean of The Western Union Company, showed a genuine enthusiasm for what many thought was crazy and unfeasible. Next thing I knew, it was he who was calling me up, upbeat as usual, and even if he had just flown in from a meeting with his colleagues in the EU. "We love do we go about this?" he asked eagerly.

I've been told it was Tabbing Pinoyan's "can do" spirit. It said the fact that it marched Western Union's global campaign called "here" that proved appealing. Appropriately, the world-renowned money transfer company was also in the business of making dreams come true daily in its 314,000 locations worldwide.

They certainly made ours a reality. Once my running partner Mel Mendiola and I took off on Mother's Day at Eagle Rock Plaza in Glendale, CA, I spent everywhere from 7 to 10 hours running an average of 26.39 miles on the shoulders of the nation's roads and scenic byways of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

It was the most physically emotionally and mentally demanding task I had ever put myself through. But then, it was also the most amazing and uplifting experience of our lives, a rare privilege that make right up there next to our run across the Philippines (from Davao City to Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte) in 2008.

Being alone on the road most of the time—and away from the Philippines for six months...made visits to Western Union centers a welcome break.

At their headquarters in Denver, CO, America's employees joined Mel and I for a welcome/close-to-second their office, then sprang for a program that included a cocktail hand, receiving dancers and Filipino food. In New Washington, MD, Pinoy groups spent their Saturday with us to a lively party of native games, karaoke and, of course, more Pinoy food.

And when Western Union hosted a press conference for us after we finally reached New York on Nov. 22, the workplace of the Philippine Consulate on 5th Avenue was packed with Filipinos.

As the weeks and months added, it was clear Mel and I got more than the financial resources to make Tabbing Pinoyan a dream was come true. Through our partnership with Western Union, we found a lifelong friend in Susan Tan, a professional photographer who put his life and work on hold to serve as our coordinator till our final destination in New York.

We also developed a strong relationship with Tony Dizon, whose company, Unlimited Dreams, oversees all the events of Western Union USA.

"A lot of what we do is work," said Tony, who has a year of my selfless running shoes encased in a glass box and mounted on the wall of his Yonkers, NY, office. "But your project was really special."

Something tells me Mel and I will be seeing Danny and Tony again.

"Western Union connects people and their dreams. It's the dream for a better life by OFWs around the world or the goal of running through the USA by a single woman, the company is a trusted partner of the Filipino," said Deputy Ranger, senior vice president, Pacific and Indochina. The Western Union Company "We are honored to be part of that great undertaking. As Pinoy ranger likes to say 'no end to what our countrymen can do.'"

After what the company has given us...the vast opportunity of running across America, and the blessings of new friends both here and abroad—I'd say the honor was ours.

GERRY de Jesus, Maja Oliveros-Co, Singapore's Bi Yong

MIGUEL and Bonifacio Monica, Olivier Oliver and Carlos Emotions

ALEX Le Marinel, Jaime Zobel, Doug Pines and Ed Mestre

Commanderie de Bordeaux Manila launched

THE COMMANDERIE DE BORDEAUX Manila was organized by a small group of lovers of Bordeaux wines. It is affiliated with a worldwide network of Commanderies de Bordeaux in 39 countries under the overall patronage of the Bordeaux-based Grand Conseil du Vin de Bordeaux (GCVB). The members (commanderies) of these chapters get together periodically for dinners called *parlements* (from the French word *parler*) to talk and other events in order to enjoy, discuss and learn more about the wines of the various Bordeaux regions in their different vintages. Through these passion for these wines, the commanders become ambassadors of the Bordeaux wines, authorities in their served his duties.

From a legal standpoint, the Commanderie de Bordeaux Manila is a single entity, with its officers led by the Master. Its aim is to provide contacts and ends between the chapters but also with other groupers in Bordeaux and their brotherhoods. It is the aim of all to promote camaraderie, civility, respect and happiness in business and business affairs.

Interest in Bordeaux wines is the prime criterion for membership, though those who have already embarked on wine collecting are especially welcome. The Commanderie seeks diversity in membership, and in particular welcomes female members.

CHAIRS DINNER Eric Pardo and Jakarta Master Augustine Qua

Presiding over the ceremony were Emmanuel Cruz, proprietor of Château d'Yquem and Grand Maître of Commanderie de Bordeaux; Jean-Michel Cazes, proprietor of Château Lynch-Bages and immediate past Grand Maître; and Vincent Chenap, Grand Maître for Asia, in their ceremonial robes.

Noel Espinosa and Pedro Arranz graciously embodied as the Grand Sachs. Doug Pines, Frederic Antheaume, Thierry Bonjean, Hervé Jr., Jorge Arranz, Edouard Moulins, Miguel Alcaide, Felicia Antenas, Clifford Lichtveer, Louis-Paul Hennuff, Mgr. Oliveros-Co, Renate Gan, Oscar Ong, Emry de Jesus, Jojo Madrid, Sachi Miki, Alex Lichtveer, Golla Rueda and Noel Bautista.

Thereafter, Cruz, as Grand Master of the Grand Conseil, served as host and convoy a few "magic lines" in French, formally inducted them into the Commanderie (starting with Pardo as the first Master of the Manila Commanderie).

Over a hundred Bordeaux aficionados attended, including honored guests from Bordeaux, Hong Kong, Macau, Shanghai, Jakarta and Singapore.

Guests included William Kim Macille and Edouard Moulins of Château Lynch-Bages; Ernest Le Bouvet of Château Mouton Rothschild; Patrice Delmondhu of Château Duhy-Barton and Eric Perrin of Château Carbonnieux; Gino Vincenzi Chan (2010 Judy Lemaire; Gerong Andrew Jaglos, Master of Shanghai Commanderie; Augustine Qua, Master of Jakarta Commanderie; KL Wong, Master Singapore Commanderie

MARGARITA Ramos, Maday Fab, Carol Soriano and Maja Oliveros-Co

Studded with style

BROWN leather gladiator sandals

BLACK studded sandals with rhinestone straps

METALLIC sandals with studs

FLAT SHOES GET A Holiday makeover and are reinvented with treats from SM. The new Parisian collection is studded with bindoore for a glam rock look that will make one simply rock in Holiday style.

The Parisian collection is available at the Ladies' and Teens' Shoes departments of all SM stores.

STUDDED ankle-strap sandals

BLACK shimmer with laces and stud details

STUDDED shimmers

JOIN it running group.

How to achieve fitness goals in 2010

By Mitch Felipe-Mendoza
Correspondent

THE FOLLOWING ARE WELL-known lessons experienced last year by clients and friends who are motivated to continue their journey this year. Apply the following not only to lose weight but to sustain healthy lifestyle habits and a positive outlook to start the year right.

Don't over-exercise

After the holiday season, many people will get gym membership or join fun sports. This is a popular resolution year after year but there is also some goals for summer and those who have gained weight after the holiday parties.

Do it in moderation so you get maximal results, and most of all, so you will not overstrain after every intense physical activity.

One of my clients who lost almost half of her weight-loss goal in six months learned from experience that burning more than 700 calories after two to three workout sessions like basketball and dance workout in a day would make her crave for food. Til present more than her usual intake. This shows that over-exercising will make weight loss difficult for you.

Healthy competition

Find fitness friends who will lead you to success. They will encourage you to keep going when challenges come your way. Weight loss plateaus, exercise boredom, emotional eating and feeling of giving up.

But being with a group, you have to consider how you eat after burning off the calories. Make sure that healthy eating is also part of your topic.

MODERATE exercise

Portion and quality control

If you have no medical condition that would require a special diet, don't even attempt to start one.

Focus on portion control before modifying the quality of your food intake. Write everything in a notebook and try to limit your food servings. If you've been used to eating all the pork bbq adventure pork chop is served, then limit her fat portions by half. Once your stomach adjusts to a lesser intake, you can target quality control by eating brown rice instead of white rice or whole grain bread instead of white bread. The common mistake of other popular diets is completely changing one's type of food right away and not accustoming before the eating too much and too fast while doing something which is more important is starting any weight loss strategy.

HEALTHY diet.

Set a new goal

An example is "to increase metabolism" and not "to lose weight."

If you always think about your weight everyday you will become a victim your goal since too much obsession with weight will cause you to ignore other positive things from happening like improved strength, better sports performance and faster metabolism. Once you don't achieve your target weight for the week, you might just retreat to emotional eating to make you feel better.

Would you like to eat more than the person who has the same weight as yours and still lose or not gain weight at all? If yes, then the secret of your fitness goal this year is to increase your daily calorie-burning capacity—or increase your metabolism. You can only achieve this through exercise to increase your lean mass and cut in moderation. Stop starving yourself just to lose weight. Eating less will cause your body to adjust to low-calorie eating and when you return to your usual eating habits, you can gain weight easily.

I have documented my total calorie burn and intake for 12 months last year. The record shows that I have never overdosed on 1,800 calories a day and eating a balanced diet. The meals I consume afford to eat additional 250 calories everyday without gaining weight.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

Cut back on sugar to avoid wrinkles

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR not knowing how to improve one's lifestyle in order to maximize God-given gifts one's body, mind and spirit.

Throat-clearing

A habit of many people, it has become acceptable even in social and business circles. The time when throats need to be cleared is the moment phlegm blocks the nasal passages. This is due to several reasons:

1) Acid reflux.—Poor digestion caused by acidity makes gas rise up from the stomach to the throat, thus irritating it. Fix the real problem—one's diet (go for more alkaline food like fruits and vegetables), or lack of digestive enzymes (hydrochloric acid (stomach a doctor).

2) Dehydration.—A silent sign of dryness is an itchy throat. Drink at least 8 cups of water or juice you can, up to three liters a day.

3) Pollution.—Poor quality air in the city contributes to more phlegm, produced by the body as a way of expelling toxins.

4) Dental health / hygiene.—Post nasal drip can be caused by poor dental care and buildup of bacteria in the mouth. Some people may have an allergic reaction to dental amalgams and root canals. Just a theory.

Menopause and fatigue

Hormone victims of pain and fatigue can be treated by menopause. This is because hormonal imbalances are the culprit. Diet of fat from organs affected is the thyroid. Have it checked together with your hormone screening. The events involved are: estrogen, progesterone, DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is the mother hormone, pregnenolone, testosterone. DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is the mother hormone, pregnenolone. Ginseng, hormone), melatonin (sleep/hormone) and human growth hormone or HGH. Cut calories in general (feeling of tiredness, fatigue, pain, exhaustion and depression.

Drink tea as all natural energy lifestyle; exercise, have adequate sleep and meditate more and relax more.

Note: Your body can only produce HGH if you get enough sleep. It is released only in the deep stages of sleep. Are be yourself how much younger you look the next day after getting a good night's sleep, and vice versa after losing sleep the night before.

Lifestyle diseases

Thirty years ago, the prevalence of diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer were unheard of. Today, they are considered diseases caused by one's lifestyle.

It's diet, diet and diet. Dr. Russell Blaylock, author of "Natural Strategies for Cancer Patients," explains that it is now evident that nutrients can be used to prevent cancer and to treat cancer cells by: increasing cancer cells.

He says that if we don't take our diets seriously, there will be dire consequences—an estimated 70 percent of all cancers are diet-related. This means red meat, fast food, hard additives and high carbohydrate diets promote the growth of existing cancer cells.

Refined breads, cauliflower, sprouts of all kinds, wheat grass, dark, leafy greens right now. We won't be sorry.

Radiant skin

There is only one way to have glowing skin. You need to glow from the inside. Get as much sun food (veggies and fruits) as possible. Then are some with orange pinch it also when sun will disturb. Drink 12-15 glasses of water daily. Add Aesthetic to your healthy eating plan. Just two tablespoons daily or, as simply as usual, will do.

Have a monthly facial with diamond peel to exfoliate skin.

Avoid the sun from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wear sunblock.

Cut back on sugar. It causes wrinkles by smashing the collagen of skin.

Stay calm

It is only when you are not excitable, angry, depressed, frustrated that your body-mind-spirit balance is in harmony. By keeping yourself stable on the inside, your body's physical appearance will be at its best.

As Bono said. Or simply, chill.

Affirm: "Today, I welcome serenity."

Love and light!

For special, free one-on-one wellness consultations, call Getwell at 7233878 or Cory at 3223864.

Past life connections revealed in dreams

(Part I)

I RECENTLY RECEIVED A long emailed e-mail from a woman living in a province south of Manila, who sent me a text message last July about an extraordinary relationship she had with a man named Dennis. She knew no one at the time, they both learned of a past life connection they had in their childhood dreams.

"It is only now I can tell you my story," she said, "because I have only now been liberated from and let go hurt. I couldn't write. Now, I feel better. If you publish my story, she wrote, just call me Kate."

"I met a man I never thought would change my heart, my life, my soul for ever!" Kate began. "He met during the most unexpected and wrong moment of time. He never look married, but we fell in love with each other so easily."

"Through total strangers, we as usual text unfathomable with each other, as though we've known each other for a long time. Our relationship grew in

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Dionson

to something we never imagined would reach the highest height in fact."

"Because I love my husband, I never knew that I could love another man far greater than I've ever loved before. We thought we were the only people in the world who were so much in love with each other. We've been like that for four unforgettable months."

"We talked a lot....about anything and everything on earth. One time, he mentioned that he had a dream during his elementary days that he couldn't forget. I honored to him attentively. In his dream, he was a Spanish soldier of high rank. He had a girlfriend. They were talking in a big, old-style house near a big open window. The scene was like the old Spanish times. From the window he could see the views of the sea with mangrove on the seashore. He told his girlfriend he was going to war. Then he left to go to war and died."

"Before he lost his breath, he was able to take off one of his war dress and gave him something he couldn't remember. He told that soldier to give that thing to his girlfriend. That was the only thing he remembered."

"I was so stunned about his dream because I had the same dream during my high school days. In my dream, I was in a big house near a big window overlooking the sea with mangrove on the shore. I was dressed in a long Spanish gown holding a classic fan."

"I had a boyfriend who was a soldier, not an ordinary soldier, but some kind of a leader or officer. We were talking near the window. He said he was going to war."

"In the next scene, I was standing near the window crying so hard, because I learned that my boyfriend had died in the war. I woke up crying because the dream was so vivid and real! I never told anyone about the dream and had forgotten it until this man told me about his strange unforgettable dream. Was this just a coincidence?"

"Another thing: One time I went to an expert tarot card reader. She knew everything about me without telling her anything. She told me all the pains this man was thinking, of and that he would marry me. I ask us to be together and a lot more. Then she told me we've been lovers before and we would always be lovers each lifetime, because we were soulmates. I couldn't believe that! Anyway, I don't want to rely on tarot card reading. Maybe it is just coincidence."

"However, the other thing we used to talk about were gems, jewelry and medallions. I told him I had a necklace with a pendant of a medallion which my grandmother gave me because I was her favorite grandchild. It was just an ordinary necklace with a Spanish designed pendant. But when my grandma passed away, it served as my most treasured inheritance. When I told him this, he was excited because he also had a medallion his grandmother gave him before he was her favorite grandson."

"He then remembered his conversation with his Muslim friend who happened to own a medallion and who wanted a woman who also had a medallion. He then asked me if I matched that both their partners in life were the same thing they had. The Muslim and his wife have it, my lover has it, but his wife doesn't have it, and I have it. Is this another coincidence?"

"Then, all of a sudden, we panted magi because of the fact that we were both married and had our own families. It was he who broke off with me. He told me to wait for him in one more life, that he would surely find me. I told him I thought he was crazy! I felt like I wanted to die. So, the same matter was wrong. All the plans of being together

E-mail the author at jaimedionson@yahoo.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

IN THIS ISSUE
Charice's Tagaytay abode Homebody /D4
Bossa nova not just a trend Review /E1

Tita Nena's unusual way of showing love

I AM SAD THAT MY "SECOND mom" Tita Nena (Amalia Fuentes) and my harrowing Lizel are at odds again.

Although Tita Nena loves Lizel dearly, she has an unusual way of showing it. Both of them should not have granted those TV interviews which only did more harm than good to their volatile relationship.

I remember hiding from Tita Nena for six hours as the waiter of the bar to come home at the time when she seemed to investigate me about Lizel's elopement with Albert Martinez. She knew that Lizel and I don't keep secrets from each other. I didn't want to commit a breach of trust with Lizel, so I didn't divulge anything to Tita Nena.

Lizel and Albert had so many struggles in the US but they stuck together. That's why I cried in their church wedding where I was one of the bridesmaids.

It's been 20 years since that day. Maybe aside from Lizel and Albert reviewing their marriage vows, Tita Nena and Lizel should also renew their vows as mother and daughter—as not only Lizel's career might be completely healed, but their relationship as well.

Sometimes we have to love our kids a little less to understand them more. And as children, we must remember that our parents might be too old to bend that they might break, so we should be the ones to reach out to them.

The new year is a good time as any for Tita Nena and Lizel to do exactly that—away from the glare of TV cameras.

***

Lotlot de Leon had a happy reunion with her mom Nora Aunor in the United States last Christmas.

I remember the day used to frequent our house when I was growing up. We took the Superstar's deepest secrets with her to the grave.

Just a tiny background. Even when we don't see each other often, we somehow feel connected.

That's why I'm happy to know that all is well between Ate Guy and Lot. Let them perfect on this page say the rest.

***

I asked director-producer Joey Reyes what changes he wants to see in the local show biz industry this year.

"Greater and wider patronage of good and deserving indie movies," he said. "Greater support given to the film and TV workers as creative agents and not merely as laborers meant for acquiring profit. A healthier and more constructive spirit of competition among studios and networks. The end of media monopolies."

Reyes said that done, but double if only the big movers and shakers would be willing to. If they badly want change to happen, it will.

***

Eugene Domingo is excited to start shooting "Here Comes the Bride." After the tremendous success of her launching movie "Emmapicra," doesn't she feel pressured to outdo herself?

"Not at all," Ugot says. "In fact, I am just so excited to do many films this year. I'm involved with creative minds about story lines and concepts. It's all about helping each other in making a worthwhile film."

Bodie to Ugot who takes fun (in making movies) seriously!

***

Lj Moreno is all agog for her wedding with rapper Jhonny Alegre on Aug. 19. "He proposed last Oct. 1," the bride-to-be says. "He threw a surprise birthday party for me. He blindfolded me from the house all the way to the hotel. When I took off the blindfold, all our friends and family were there."

Lj and Jhonny are a welcome addition to the list of actress/basketball player couples. May their union never have foul trouble and always have the winning shot.

E-mail tsaringbalubalang@yahoo.com.

HAPPY REUNION. Superstar Nora Aunor with daughter Lotlot de Leon

From Pritil to Lyon, France —and back with trophy

By Rayvel San Diego Jr.

WHEN MILO SOGUICO was shooting his debut film "Sanglaan" on the streets of Pritil, Tondo, flying to France was the farthest thing from his mind.

"Sanglaan" went on to win the Best Film at the Lyon Asian Film Festival held late last year. It bagged the Festival Grand Prix du Public and the Silver Prize (New Asian Cinema).

His biggest challenges in finishing this movie, his Cinemalaya 2009 entry, were "budget and time," Soguico said. "We're on 6 24 hours straight sometimes. It was tough shooting in Tondo. Traffic was hard to control. Yet this wasn't for sorts in the finished film."

Between takes

What happened between takes, he explained, was "as important as what happened in front of the camera."

He happily recalled: "The people at Pritil were so supportive...they would clap every time I yelled 'Cut!'"

He had a cooperative and committed cast and crew to boot.

"I couldn't have worked with anybody else but them," said Soguico. "Rustin (Timon), Ian (Delos), James (Ramon), Pilot (Salangid), Ann (Kristalmo) and the rest were all intelligent and thinking actors."

The actors helped him tell a story that's particularly close to his heart, he said.

Soguico, who grew up in a pawnshop, knows the film's milieu very well. "Sanglaan" chronicles the struggles of ordinary people who depend on a pawnshop during financial crises.

"It's a story so simple—but you may think it's not worth telling. It seems the characters are just waiting—but working in a pawnshop is all about waiting. I think story is about finding beauty in the mundane."

Honor

Soguico hopes foreign audiences will also see such gems in specialized fests. He said screening "Sanglaan" in France was an honor. "It's always an experience to show a film to a different audience. We went to Lyon without expectations. [except] for a small film like ours to vanish. We were so also few so far from the Philippines."

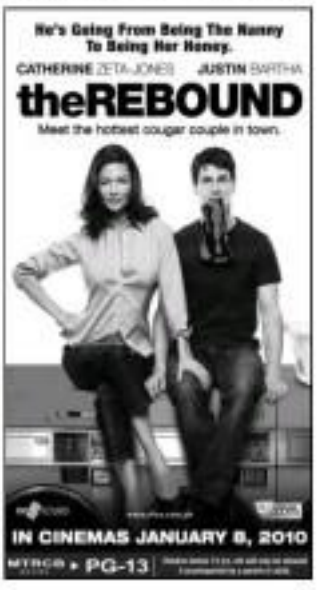
He also hopes Filipino viewers will catch his film when it's screened locally again. It was shown at the IndieSine Robinsons Galleria last month.

"My wish for Pinoy films and filmmakers is that local audiences will give them the same respect and recognition they extend to the international scene. We are Filipinos; it should start here," he pointed out. "What is a film without an audience? To see somebody smiling, crying, laughing or even cringing while watching your film is the most fulfilling part of the job."

Next steps for him are "a short film to be entered next year and a feature film to be scripted as well."

As for "Sanglaan," post-Lyon? "I just want for it to [make some money]. We have bills to pay," he quipped.

E-mail: bayanisandiego@hotmail.com.



LIVING Stars

Edna Esmeralda G. Yolanda
e-mail: ednayolanda@inquirer.com.ph

WISH LIST

Glan Sotto

I WISH FOR PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY TO UNITE. IT'S SAD THAT very few Pinoy movies are being produced today. I hope that the crisis in the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation will inspire more producers to create more films in 2010.

Married R. Cruz

MOST SURPRISED the world-renowned singer with a home all lit up with festive lanterns from Pampanga.

CHARICE opened the doors to her Tagaytay home to family and friends this holiday season.

Season of good cheer and Charice

World-renowned singer spends the holidays with her family in new Tagaytay house for the first time

By Roxan Gan Dingle Jr.
Photos by Andrew Tuazon

ALFONSO, CAVITE —World-renowned singer Charice Pempengco's fondest wish came true recently.

"I got to spend the holidays in my Tagaytay house for the first time," quipped the Filipina teenager who was dubbed the "most talented girl in the world" by American TV host Oprah Winfrey.

Fortunately, her hectic work schedule in the United States took just enough room for a two-week break in the Philippines.

"Nothing beats Christmas in the Philippines and being with my family and loving tsoko buns (Christmas dinner) together. I received a lot of blessings in 2009, celebrating the holidays here is yet another blessing," she explained.

In a lot of ways, this truly "feels" like Yuletide season in their Tagaytay house, which stands in a village teeming with cool pine trees.

"Charice likes the cool weather here," mom Raquel said.

To keep warm, mom serves traditional favorites like hot chocolate, ham and queso de bola. But Charice's only request is homemade spaghetti topped with lots of cheese—quess, of course.

Surprise

When Charice and younger brother Carl got back from the US last month, mom surprised them with a fully decorated home.

"She didn't tell us about it. When we got here, the house was all lit up. It was beautiful," she recalled.

CHARICE, mom Raquel and brother Carl put up their first Christmas tree in their new home this year.

Hanging by the terrace was a white parol flattered made from capiz shells. "When I was a child, I used to see colorful lanterns sold in the streets, but we couldn't afford one then," said Charice.

The lantern is a reminder of her proud Kapampa.

Her mother, she fulfilled her family's dream of owning their own home in Tagaytay. At home, her home is well-appointed with feminine pieces from Italy.

Along with a street-door apartment complex in Laguna, the family also has a condo unit in a building that's only 10 minutes away from the airport, courtesy of Elite Overseas Corp. Realty (a company Charice endorsed).

Charice's latest endorsement deal, German electronics brand Sennheiser, gifted her with a Sennheiser evolution microphone—the same kind used by Beyonce, Shakira, Kylie Minogue and Celine Dion in their concerts.

The Swarovski star cocoons with Charice everywhere, and more.

While Charice was on the road, her mother worked on the red, gold and green décor at home.

Mom Raquel said she slowly acquired the holiday trinkets here and in the US—limousine, sculptures from Antipolo and other ornaments from The Store in Los Angeles, lanterns from Batangas, fairie figures and a seven-foot Christmas tree from a local mall.

Charice thoroughly enjoys the season of glad tidings. "When I was a kid," she recounted, "my brother and I went caroling in our old neighborhood in Laguna. Carl played the drums, while I sang. Sin With you (Always Christmas)' I had to the only song I knew then."

Now, apart from covering Akon Boyz' "No One" in the 90th and the Chipmunks' The Squeakquel' soundtrack, Charice has two Christmas songs to the US market.

She did a duet of "I Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" with "Superstar Idol" finalist David Archuleta in his "Christmas from the Heart" CD.

She also recorded "The Christmas Song," arranged by David Foster, in the all-star album "A Very Special Christmas" which also features Miley Cyrus, Vanessa Hudgens and Carrie Underwood).

Charice remains just as busy at on the holidays.

She welcomes the New Year with a bang, with the release of her single "Pyramid" which will have its high-hop-artist flair. By February or March, her US debut album will hit the stores.

Also in the works are "surprise" collaborations with other top artists next year.

"I'll be fully booked in 2010. There are plans to do a US tour for my album. I also have a Valentine concert at the PICC. Hopefully we could bring the David Foster and Friends' show to Manila. He (David) wants to visit the country," she said.

There is also talk that she may guest in the popular TV show "Glee."

"I heard that rumor, too," said Charice. "Maybe I can request that from my US manager."

Although international fame —as the overwhelming mom Raquel makes sure to keep Charice's feet firmly planted on the ground.

"Her singing has grown more mature, but she's the same little girl I raised," mom said. "Her attitude is I am blessed—she'll remain humble and level-headed."

Washing Dishes

At home, Charice gets no preferential treatment, mom insisted. "I ask her to wash the dishes. Plain. It's time to go abroad, she packs her own bags. She's not accustomed to chores."

When she's at home in Tagaytay, Charice is content to stay in her blue-and-white bedroom the whole day. "I hardly go out. Everything's in my room. All my gadgets. The computers, the cameras, the iPod, the PSP."

But some dinner time, mom makes sure that they share the meal together.

More bonding moments are spent on the second floor den, where they play billiards and jam on the three tubolex machines.

"Minsan pag mga kapitbahay si kuko nihihiram ko. (The neighbors would go deaf with my mistake singing.) I love belting out rock tunes like 'The Cranberries' 'Zombie' at home," Charice joked.

E-mail: hyperionmedia@hotmail.com

JUST one of the many Santa Claus figures in the home.

ZEN candles and rock garden are one decked for the season.

THE TWO-STORY home stands in a village teeming with pine trees.

VIEW from second floor foyer: Crystal chandelier is European-inspired living area's centerpiece.

EVEN the orderly kitchen is decorated with green, gold and red knights of holly.

MOM also decorated the green guest room with glittery ornaments.

SECOND-floor sitting room features ceramic Nativity scenes, angel figures and miniature Christmas trees.

EASY-decorated living room, with heirloom pieces from Italy, sun-beaten Waterlily throw pillows.

CARL and Charice play billiards in the den on the second floor.

ENTERTAINMENT

Bossa nova no longer just a trend

By Pocholo Concepcion

THE RELEASE OF THE FOLLOWING three albums signify that bossa nova and samba have gone beyond their trendy phase in the Philippines these past few years—after enjoying relative success via Bong Peñata and the Bossacats in the 1970s.

Siti

"Contagious"
Warner Music

"Contagious," Siti's third studio album, has quite a varied repertoire of covers, including Gala ("Your Love Is King"), Callalily Club ("No I'm Really Want To Hurt Me"), Sinsia ("Pretenders: A New Day For You"), Hail & Ostrea ("Kiss on Deal"), Ramon Lemosan ("No Where I Love You's"), plus a number of Jolin classics and a few more oldies.

Her original track, "Is This Love," was reportedly written for Siti by a group of foreign composers led by George Mariaga. It sounds good and could soon find airtime on a quiet night. In fact the whole album is perfect for chilling out, which makes the effort of finding fault in Siti's hushed vocal range unnecessary.

Sophia

"Kilos Mucci Bossa Nova"
SDI

Likewise, Sophia's latest CD, "Girl Meets Bossa Nova"—released exclusively in Japan but whose Asian version containing two originals will be out here soon year—is not meant for anything other than to just sit to a relaxed mood. The singer's voice is like a soft breeze which, combined with gentle acoustic guitars, stimulates bliss.

But is that all there is to this type of music?

What keeps it from getting boring, in Sophia's album's case, is the thrill of rediscovering the beauty of the lyrics in "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue," "Moon River" and "Guilty," among others. It's also here where "How Deep Is Your Love" sounds new again—in case one has overplayed Barry Gibb's chants in the original version.

Guevara

"Spirit of Samba"
Vivo Records

Yet the most convincing argument on why we should not take bossa nova, or its elder cousin, samba, for granted, is the existence of Guevara—the local band fronted by singer and samba dance instructor Eileen Sison.

On its sophomore record, "Spirit of Samba," the group—better suited for the music can be adapted in various arrangements and tempos.

The album's 10-all-original tracks utilize a hybrid of Brazilian, Latin and Western jazz forms as backdrop to express the highs and lows of romantic love—in English and Tagalog, with an interesting mix to Pinoy culture, "Tayo Tuntan," right on the first number.

Sison leads an excellent band, some of whose members are highly regarded artists in the Makati Guevara (sax/flute), Alfie Maiquez (trumpet) and Arnulfo Simon (drums). The rest—Shelbie Quirino (percussion), Ike Ejano (bass) and Mike Duave de Leon (vocals/percussion)—are no less talented and complete the ensemble's vibrant sound.

The result is a professionally competent, heartfelt interpretation of a festive, sometimes moody kind of music whose power obliterates cultural barriers.

Agot Isidro

"White Lace & Promises"
Jollyfour Records

The prolific first-time Agot Isidro as a wedding singer on the TV broadcast of the Ryan Agoncillo-Judey Santos nuptials. Then the guys at Jollyfour Records convinced Agot to seize the momentum and record a whole album of wedding songs—or more that would fit that kind of milestone in one's life. Perfect marketing idea? That's already a given.

The more interesting question, as one listens to this 12-track CD, is: Which song breaks the monotony of reliving starry-eyed romance that "Square at Italian man," "We've Only Just Begun," "Here, Where and Everywhere" (hilariously medleyed to George Harrison), "I Will" and the rest convey?

The answer is on track 4, "This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)"—a four-year number originally recorded by Natalie Cole and which Agot covers with flying colors, right up to the last wedding notes. It's perfect for the wedding reception.

Jaya

"Real Love Stories"
GMA Records

One of the country's best pop singers says she was several months pregnant while recording this album—which she didn't mind doing because she loved the songs. She does a fairly good job, especially to Kenny Rankin's "Hiding Inside Myself," which evokes a milder feeling when one realizes that the songwriter has died recently.

The only drawback to this record are Jaya's tendency to play around certain vocal parts in her typical R&B style that sometimes spoils the song's instrumentals, and the recurring problem of producers emphasizing lackadaisical backing vocals even when digital technology makes everything sound anchovic.

Noel Cabangon

"Hydra"
Universal Records

On this major-label debut album, the venerable singer-songwriter proves it's not a crime to do novelties—so long as the interpreter is able to take the songs on a new level of appreciation.

The result: Boy Abunda's "Kahit Maguel Ka Ang Bahoh Ko," for instance, doesn't sound like it was written for Sharon Cuneta, but for everyone just their middle age. There are several more good examples ("Ang Kiang Antin," "Ipag-patawad Mo," "Wish," "Tao," "Ang Babaeng Hinahanap Ko"), each of them "uncovering" a certain truth or beauty in the lyrics which one might have overlooked before.

The appeal of "Hydra" lies in the works' spare arrangements: it's mostly Cabangon's acoustic guitar accompanying his husky vocals which, devoid of studio enhancement, packs so much honesty in so few notes.

A bonus treat is the inclusion of three original songs: The classic "Kanlungan" (written by Cabangon's Rubber band mate, Rom Dongeto, presented here as a duet with Imago's Mia de Leon); "Dito Sa Kanto" (Cabangon's own composition, also featuring Pasdyo at Folger's Claire Mendiola); and "Ang Buhay Nga Naman" (the theme song of the indie film "Dad Na Si Lolo").

Piolo Pascual still on top

THE BEST-SELLING ALBUMS IN the Philippines for the week Dec. 21–27, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's nationwide sales, reports:

OPM

1) "Decades," Piolo Pascual, Star Records; 2) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Exclusive Milan One Edition)," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 3) "Ikaw Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 4) "Your Christmas Girl," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 5) "The Appetizer," Urbandub, MCA Music; 6) "Pray: The Mysteries Of The Holy Rosary," Various Artists, Star Records; 7) "Ya 1," Martin Nievera & Gary Valenciano, Universal Records; 8) "Your Christmas Girl," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 9) "May Bukas Pa: Teleserye Soundtrack," Various Artists, Star Records; 10) "Christmas Dance-A-Thon Reloaded," Various Artists, Synergy Music

Overall

1) "My Christmas," Andrea Bocelli, MCA Music; 2) "Decades," Piolo Pascual, Star Records; 3) "Stateless (Platinum Edition)," Taylor Swift, MCA Music; 4) "The Fame Monster," Lady Gaga, MCA Music; 5) "Romance Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan (Exclusive Milan One Edition)," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 6) "Ikaw Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 7) "Your Christmas Girl," Sarah Geronimo, Viva Records; 8) "My World," Justin Bieber, MCA Music; 9) "The Appetizer," Urbandub, MCA Music; 10) "2009 Year Of Us," Disney, Universal Records

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

SITTI'S new CD, "Contagious" (left), is perfect for chilling out, while Agot Isidro's "White Lace & Promises" is a whole album of wedding songs.

REVIEW

OPENS JANUARY 8

REGENERATED FOR ONE FINAL MISSION.

INQUIRER mobile news

the latest showbiz news all in one number: 4467

text INQ <space> ON <space> SHOWBIZ to 4467 for SMS alerts

text INQMMS <space> ON <space> SHOWBIZ to 4467 for MMS alerts

AVAILABLE TO Globe, Smart, and Sun subscribers
EXISTING SUBSCRIBERS do not need to register again

Call 896-6000 for more details.

CINEMA ACCESS: 395-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 MANO PO 6
7 MARAMAN
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 AMO PAMDAY
10 MANO PO 6

MANILA

1 MARAMAN
2 MANO PO 6
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

METRO EAST

1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 MANO PO 6
6 MARAMAN
7 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
8 HUKBONG

MONUMENTO

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 MARAMAN
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG

STA. ROSA

1 AMO PAMDAY
2 MANO PO 6
3 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

LIPA

1 AMO PAMDAY
2 MANO PO 6
3 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
4 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG

DASMARIÑAS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 MANO PO 6
4 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

STARMILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

IMUS

1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 MARAMAN
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

ANGELES

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG

TAGUIGAN

1 MANO PO 6
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 AMO PAMDAY

DUMAGUETE

1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 MANO PO 6
3 AMO PAMDAY

BACOLOD

1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY

ILOILO

1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

GENSAN

1 MARAMAN
2 MANO PO 6
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 MANO PO 6
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

SM CINEMA

visit: www.smcinema.com

EVENT!

PHOTO EXHIBIT

Visit Ang Barkley Love Aswangs photo exhibit at SM North EDSA and Megamall Cinema lobbies!

CATCH THE ROVING ASWANGS

Take a photo with the movie's loving Aswangs at SM Mall of Asia, SM North EDSA and SM Megamall Cinema lobbies on January 11

PLUS!

Take a photo at Ang Barkley Love Aswangs movie photo booklets only at SM Megamall and North EDSA cinema lobbies!

metro manila

DIGITAL SOUND

SM NORTH EDSA
Cinema 1 (The Dome) — Cinema 7
Wednesday

SM MALL OF ASIA — SM MEGAMALL
Cinema 6 — Megamovie
Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users

SM MOLINO 2 — SM BICUTAN
Wednesday — Wednesday

SM MARIKINA — SM SAN LAZARO
Wednesday — Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users

SM STA. ROSA — SM CITY CLARK
Wednesday — Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users

SM CLARK — SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users — Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users

smglobeonline@smcinema.com

IMAX THEATRE

SM MALL OF ASIA — SM NORTH EDSA
AVENGERS — AVENGERS
2:30 PM — 2:30 PM
5:30 PM — 5:30 PM
8:30 PM — 8:30 PM
Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users — Wednesday, Wednesday Mini Users

DIRECTOR'S CLUB
I LOVE YOU GOODBYE — DARLING KONG ASWANG

FORUM
Cinema 1: I LOVE YOU GOODBYE — Cinema 2: DARLING KONG ASWANG

SM NORTH EDSA
1 MARAMAN
2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 MANO PO 6
8 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
9 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
10 AMO PAMDAY

SM MALL OF ASIA
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 AMO PAMDAY
8 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
9 MARAMAN
10 MANO PO 6

SM MEGAMALL
1 MARAMAN
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
7 AMO PAMDAY
8 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
9 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

SM CITY MARIKINA
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
8 MANO PO 6
9 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 MARAMAN
2 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 MANO PO 6
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
8 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

SM MOLINO 2
1 MARAMAN
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
7 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
8 MANO PO 6

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 MANO PO 6
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 AMO PAMDAY
6 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
7 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
8 MANO PO 6

SM CITY CLARK
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 MANO PO 6
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 MANO PO 6
10 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11

SM STA. MESA
1 AMO PAMDAY
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MARAMAN

SM SOUTHMALL
1 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
7 MARAMAN
8 MANO PO 6
9 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM MANILA
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 MANO PO 6
7 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
8 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 MARAMAN
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 MANO PO 6
7 AMO PAMDAY
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM CITY MASINAG
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 MARAMAN

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MANO PO 6
8 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 MARAMAN
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 MANO PO 6
7 AMO PAMDAY
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM CITY MASINAG
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 MARAMAN

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MANO PO 6
8 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM CITY CLARK
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 MANO PO 6
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS
1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 AMO PAMDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 MANO PO 6
10 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM STA. MESA
1 AMO PAMDAY
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MARAMAN

SM SOUTHMALL
1 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
7 MARAMAN
8 MANO PO 6
9 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11

SM MANILA
1 MARAMAN
2 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 MANO PO 6
7 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
8 AMO PAMDAY

luzon

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 MANO PO 6
4 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY LIPA
1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
3 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
4 MARAMAN

SM CITY LUCENA
1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 AMO PAMDAY
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

SM CITY CLARK
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 TERRIFY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
6 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
4 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY STA. ROSA
1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
3 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY SAN PABLO
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
4 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY BACOLOD
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AMO PAMDAY
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MARAMAN

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AMO PAMDAY
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 MANO PO 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
7 MARAMAN

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY DAGUPAN
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
4 AMO PAMDAY

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY SAN FERNANDO
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
4 AMO PAMDAY

visayas - mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
1 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
3 MARAMAN
4 TERRIFY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6 MANO PO 6
7 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 AMO PAMDAY
10 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG

SM CITY CEBU
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
4 AMO PAMDAY
5 MANO PO 6
6 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY CEBU
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY CEBU
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

SM CITY CEBU
1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 11
6 AMO PAMDAY
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 AMO PAMDAY
9 AMO DARLING KONG ASWANG
10 MANO PO 6

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

A. LEPAN

BY JOE LABRERA

PUGAD BARDO

BY PH. JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOINGNOGTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGSO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABUALAN

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK

BY RAMIL CRUZ

BEN

BY DAVID, SHELTON

ATOMIC AND WEEBOT

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

BIBO MACHINE

BY RAMIS ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Tuley

7 9		6 3
	3	
8 3	9 6	4 5
	1	2
5	4	8
8		4
2 1	4 5	3 7
	2	
6 7		2 8

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	3	5	7	1	6	9	8	2
1	8	9	3	2	5	4	7	6
6	2	7	4	9	8	1	3	5
8	4	1	9	5	7	2	3	6
5	6	2	8	4	3	7	9	1
7	9	3	2	6	1	4	5	8
9	7	4	6	3	2	8	1	5
3	5	8	1	7	9	6	2	4
2	1	6	5	8	4	3	7	9

At the Cinemas

GLORIETTA 4

GREENBELT 1

GREENBELT 2

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

TRINOMA

MARKET! MARKET!

AYALA CENTER CEBU

MARQUEE

For optimum viewing, please visit TGI-!!!!

Ayala Malls

The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays and corporate events.

Greenbelt

Now accepting bookings for March to May 2010.

So, for real quality shows, catch the limelight at OnStage Greenbelt!

For booking & inquiries, please call TEL 7811 to 42

Greenbelt

At the Malls

GLORIETTA

The Big Low-small Sale. Grab up to 80% discount in participating establishments. January 8-17

GREENBELT

The Big Low-small Sale. Grab up to 80% discount in participating establishments. January 8-17

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Big Blue Collection

Sa Iba Iba Ito Regalo Today

January 4-17, Activity Center

AYALA CENTER CEBU

Shindig Dancers around the mall

January 9, 11-1

MARKET! MARKET!

The Big Low-small Sale. Grab up to 80% discount in participating establishments. January 8-17

BONIFACIO HIGH STREET

The Big Low-small Sale. Grab up to 80% discount in participating establishments. January 8-17

TRINOMA

Santa's Photo Station

November 28-December 25

Level 4 Creative Lobby

ONSTAGE

Jack And The Beanstalk

August 15 - December 15, 2009

For more details, please call

Map call 897-0010

Greenbelt Freebee Surprises

And that's just the start

Enjoy exclusive perks on your shopping, dining and entertainment choices only with the Ayala Malls A Card.

To apply, visit any Ayala Malls Concierge or log on to www.ayalamalls.com.ph

Greenbelt | Glorietta | Trinoma | Alabang Town Center | Onstage | Marquee Mall

Introducing the Pop Girls

By Hannah S. Cruz

THE SUCCESS OF KOREAN ACTS LIKE Wonder Girls and 2NE1 has inspired Viva Entertainment big boss Vic del Rosario to create the new record label Viva Pop (V-Pop), with the hope that its first member group, Pop Girls, will also make it big in the international market.

"The Filipino Girls are introducing a new trend to Asia—until I do it in fashion where you have to follow the trend sometimes. The concept is to create high-end music with a local feel. What we're doing now is trying to use that for made locally," said international music producer Marcus Davis, who, along with Christian de Walden, is helping Del Rosario run the P-Pop label.

THE singing group Pop Girls (L-R) Liz, Selest, Marlene, Rose and Mae hopes to make it big in the music scene.

Original work

"I've worked with other music companies here," said the US-born Davis. "In the four years that I've been here, there were a lot of covers and recycled albums. When we were here it was original work. We're proud to represent it."

The all-girl group, composed of the Letterman-Filipino twins Liz and Mae Ramos, 16, Marlene Lenine, 15, Rose Ann Grubel, 13, and Selest Sagrati, 14, had its debut performance on Saturday, July 18, at the eighty second concert, "Boom! Ramdam" at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Pop Girls recently launched its 11-track, self-titled CD, with original dance tunes like "crazy," written by Marcus and Amber Davis, and "Crushy," by top choreographer Geleen Eugenio.

"Since girls are multi-talented, we want release one to work, the others are strong. Rose has a very high and powerful voice. Selest is very soft and has a pretty voice. The twins are good with harmony. Marlene, the lead singer, has a spitfire personality," explained Davis.

Mae, Liz, Marlene, Selest and Rose were chosen from more than 50 hopefuls who auditioned. Each of them signed management and recording contracts with P-Pop.

First step

For the Pop Girls to make it big worldwide, Davis said that first step is to make the group locally acceptable. "We plan to build a fan base for the girls here. Once they have that following, we hope to create an image for them that's more international. That's what other groups are doing. As a result, people know even if they don't understand what those groups are saying," he pointed out.

Davis said his group is well aware of how difficult it would be for pop groups to make it here. By "The Pop Girls will not just be a flash in the pan. And like the Silhouette Girls, we hope that people all around the world will support them."

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

NOW SHOWING

Movies Schedules & Prices Subject To Change Without Prior Notice

Ayala Cinemas	Cinema	Festival Cinema
Ayala Cinema 1	Cinema 1	Festival Cinema 1
Ayala Cinema 2	Cinema 2	Festival Cinema 2
Ayala Cinema 3	Cinema 3	Festival Cinema 3
Ayala Cinema 4	Cinema 4	Festival Cinema 4
Ayala Cinema 5	Cinema 5	Festival Cinema 5
Ayala Cinema 6	Cinema 6	Festival Cinema 6
Ayala Cinema 7	Cinema 7	Festival Cinema 7
Ayala Cinema 8	Cinema 8	Festival Cinema 8
Ayala Cinema 9	Cinema 9	Festival Cinema 9
Ayala Cinema 10	Cinema 10	Festival Cinema 10
Ayala Cinema 11	Cinema 11	Festival Cinema 11
Ayala Cinema 12	Cinema 12	Festival Cinema 12
Ayala Cinema 13	Cinema 13	Festival Cinema 13
Ayala Cinema 14	Cinema 14	Festival Cinema 14
Ayala Cinema 15	Cinema 15	Festival Cinema 15
Ayala Cinema 16	Cinema 16	Festival Cinema 16
Ayala Cinema 17	Cinema 17	Festival Cinema 17
Ayala Cinema 18	Cinema 18	Festival Cinema 18
Ayala Cinema 19	Cinema 19	Festival Cinema 19
Ayala Cinema 20	Cinema 20	Festival Cinema 20
Ayala Cinema 21	Cinema 21	Festival Cinema 21
Ayala Cinema 22	Cinema 22	Festival Cinema 22
Ayala Cinema 23	Cinema 23	Festival Cinema 23
Ayala Cinema 24	Cinema 24	Festival Cinema 24
Ayala Cinema 25	Cinema 25	Festival Cinema 25
Ayala Cinema 26	Cinema 26	Festival Cinema 26
Ayala Cinema 27	Cinema 27	Festival Cinema 27
Ayala Cinema 28	Cinema 28	Festival Cinema 28
Ayala Cinema 29	Cinema 29	Festival Cinema 29
Ayala Cinema 30	Cinema 30	Festival Cinema 30
Ayala Cinema 31	Cinema 31	Festival Cinema 31
Ayala Cinema 32	Cinema 32	Festival Cinema 32
Ayala Cinema 33	Cinema 33	Festival Cinema 33
Ayala Cinema 34	Cinema 34	Festival Cinema 34
Ayala Cinema 35	Cinema 35	Festival Cinema 35
Ayala Cinema 36	Cinema 36	Festival Cinema 36
Ayala Cinema 37	Cinema 37	Festival Cinema 37
Ayala Cinema 38	Cinema 38	Festival Cinema 38
Ayala Cinema 39	Cinema 39	Festival Cinema 39
Ayala Cinema 40	Cinema 40	Festival Cinema 40
Ayala Cinema 41	Cinema 41	Festival Cinema 41
Ayala Cinema 42	Cinema 42	Festival Cinema 42
Ayala Cinema 43	Cinema 43	Festival Cinema 43
Ayala Cinema 44	Cinema 44	Festival Cinema 44
Ayala Cinema 45	Cinema 45	Festival Cinema 45
Ayala Cinema 46	Cinema 46	Festival Cinema 46
Ayala Cinema 47	Cinema 47	Festival Cinema 47
Ayala Cinema 48	Cinema 48	Festival Cinema 48
Ayala Cinema 49	Cinema 49	Festival Cinema 49
Ayala Cinema 50	Cinema 50	Festival Cinema 50
Ayala Cinema 51	Cinema 51	Festival Cinema 51
Ayala Cinema 52	Cinema 52	Festival Cinema 52
Ayala Cinema 53	Cinema 53	Festival Cinema 53
Ayala Cinema 54	Cinema 54	Festival Cinema 54
Ayala Cinema 55	Cinema 55	Festival Cinema 55
Ayala Cinema 56	Cinema 56	Festival Cinema 56
Ayala Cinema 57	Cinema 57	Festival Cinema 57
Ayala Cinema 58	Cinema 58	Festival Cinema 58
Ayala Cinema 59	Cinema 59	Festival Cinema 59
Ayala Cinema 60	Cinema 60	Festival Cinema 60
Ayala Cinema 61	Cinema 61	Festival Cinema 61
Ayala Cinema 62	Cinema 62	Festival Cinema 62
Ayala Cinema 63	Cinema 63	Festival Cinema 63
Ayala Cinema 64	Cinema 64	Festival Cinema 64
Ayala Cinema 65	Cinema 65	Festival Cinema 65
Ayala Cinema 66	Cinema 66	Festival Cinema 66
Ayala Cinema 67	Cinema 67	Festival Cinema 67
Ayala Cinema 68	Cinema 68	Festival Cinema 68
Ayala Cinema 69	Cinema 69	Festival Cinema 69
Ayala Cinema 70	Cinema 70	Festival Cinema 70
Ayala Cinema 71	Cinema 71	Festival Cinema 71
Ayala Cinema 72	Cinema 72	Festival Cinema 72
Ayala Cinema 73	Cinema 73	Festival Cinema 73
Ayala Cinema 74	Cinema 74	Festival Cinema 74
Ayala Cinema 75	Cinema 75	Festival Cinema 75
Ayala Cinema 76	Cinema 76	Festival Cinema 76
Ayala Cinema 77	Cinema 77	Festival Cinema 77
Ayala Cinema 78	Cinema 78	Festival Cinema 78
Ayala Cinema 79	Cinema 79	Festival Cinema 79
Ayala Cinema 80	Cinema 80	Festival Cinema 80
Ayala Cinema 81	Cinema 81	Festival Cinema 81
Ayala Cinema 82	Cinema 82	Festival Cinema 82
Ayala Cinema 83	Cinema 83	Festival Cinema 83
Ayala Cinema 84	Cinema 84	Festival Cinema 84
Ayala Cinema 85	Cinema 85	Festival Cinema 85
Ayala Cinema 86	Cinema 86	Festival Cinema 86
Ayala Cinema 87	Cinema 87	Festival Cinema 87
Ayala Cinema 88	Cinema 88	Festival Cinema 88
Ayala Cinema 89	Cinema 89	Festival Cinema 89
Ayala Cinema 90	Cinema 90	Festival Cinema 90
Ayala Cinema 91	Cinema 91	Festival Cinema 91
Ayala Cinema 92	Cinema 92	Festival Cinema 92
Ayala Cinema 93	Cinema 93	Festival Cinema 93
Ayala Cinema 94	Cinema 94	Festival Cinema 94
Ayala Cinema 95	Cinema 95	Festival Cinema 95
Ayala Cinema 96	Cinema 96	Festival Cinema 96
Ayala Cinema 97	Cinema 97	Festival Cinema 97
Ayala Cinema 98	Cinema 98	Festival Cinema 98
Ayala Cinema 99	Cinema 99	Festival Cinema 99
Ayala Cinema 100	Cinema 100	Festival Cinema 100

Walter Mart

The Perfect Gift All YEAR ROUND

Robinsons Movieworld

prepaid card

Movieworld

Did You Know...

A baby boy for Morrison

LOS ANGELES—Actor Van Morrison has been born.

The 64-year-old Irish singer was on his 59th solo tour when he and his wife, Kirk, welcomed their son George Ivan Morrison from Monday.

The couple named their "Little Star" is "the opening image of her daddy's." The baby is a dual citizen of the United States and United Kingdom. AP

'Tyra Show' says goodbye

NEW YORK—Tyra Banks is pulling the plug on her talk show.

The former model says the syndicated "Tyra Show" will end after its fifth season. Banks says she's deciding with the media [illegible] "America's Next Top Model" and is forming a new production unit to do with plans to make movies.

She also promised new digital projects, but wouldn't give details.

Ahead her own show, Banks told fans: "I've been living here [illegible] my time your living room, bedroom, hair salons for the past five years." AP

Greenbelt | Glorietta | Trinoma | Alabang Town Center | Onstage | Marquee Mall

Greenbelt Cinemas 1-10

Ayala Cinemas 4

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

It's the End of 2009, time for

SALE!

UP TO 70% OFF

DEC 25 - JAN 17